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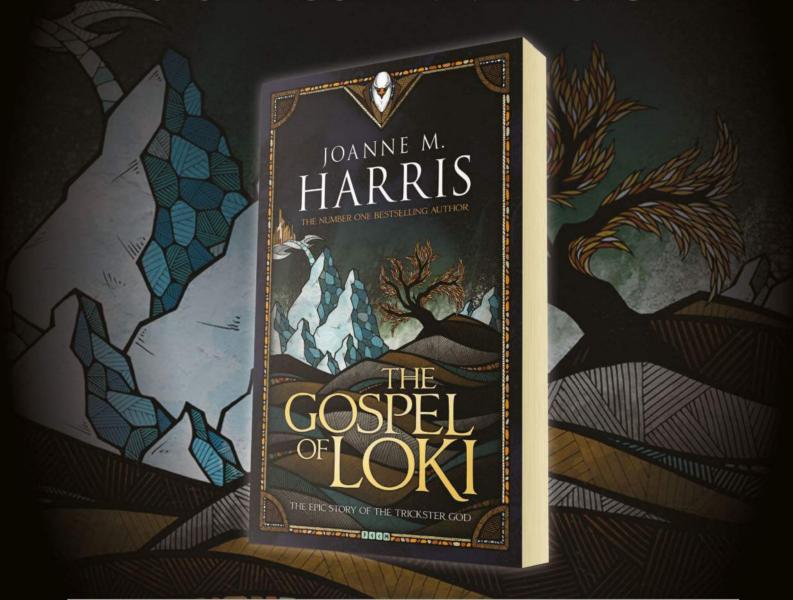
Nick hums a John Barry tune or two.

'This mythical bad boy should beguile fans of Neil Gaiman' 'For lovers of myth, legend and Game of Thrones'

'Lively and fun'

'Witty and magical'

### A NAME YOU KNOW. A STORY YOU'LL NEVER FORGET.



AN EPIC NEW FANTASY NOVEL FROM THE NO. 1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR







### THE INSIDE SKINNY

What your SFX chums are thinking about...

Really sad to hear of the passing of James Horn One of the great movie composers – his Wrath



Of Khan score is one of my all-time faves

fifth season was its weakest for a while - and a little short on joy. Perhaps one day good things will start happening to good people

### IAN BERRIMAN

RAVES Current listening



coming to Blu-ray (27 July).

Toby Hadoke's radio play *The Dad Who Fell To Earth* is well worth checking out on iPlayer.

### NICK SETCHFIELD RAVES





Patrick Macnee and Christopher Lee se immortal - and I suppose they are. True talents, bigger than the screen.





I listen to James Horner's Aliens soundtrack on an almost daily basis, what a tragedy he'll never wor

en again

RAVES

Taken aback by the sheer nostalgia-blast I got from seeing the park open for business at start of *Jurassic World*.

This month in being way behind on things cartoons. I have been alued to Adult Swim's

delightful Rick And Morty and Pendelton The end of Game Of Thrones season five loved it. But that short broadcast delay turns

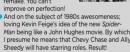






And we lost Patrick Macnee too. Again, I've seen him a ton of his TV episodes and films and his work meant a lot to me

Glad to hear that Robert Zemeckis has ruled out a Back To The Future remake. You can't improve on perfection!







had me sold.

The remake of *The Clangers* gets a thumb

### **DAVE BRADLEY**

The makers of SFX and The makers of SFX and Total Film are launching a crime drama quarterly! Fans of Sherlock and True Detective look out for Crime Scene, in print fron

We're also bringing back our Comic Heroes mag. Fan of comics and superheroes? Get more information on our website soor

Farewell Christopher Lee and Patrick Mac

### **ADRIAN HILL**

2015 has a new nam "The Death of Heroes"
- Patrick Macnee and the master of darkness



Christoper Lee. Both were real heroes of mine growing up. I can still remember watching The Avengers, which became a real family affair. As for Christopher Lee, he used to scare the living daylights out of me, but I always came back for more. RIP gentlemen

### **SARAH DOBBS**

Scream Queens looks incredible, kind of like American Horror Story meets post-moderi '90s slashers. Can a UK broadcaster get on board soon, please?

With Jurassic World, how come no one's talking fault? He's the idiot who went into the I Rex's cage and let her escape. Wish he'd been eate

row, the first super Zor-El in Supergirl, which looks to bring the Maid of Might to screen life in, at long last, a

solo project that's worthy of he

### SFX Next issue on sale Wednesday 19 August 2015

Postal address: Quav House, The Ambury, Bath, BA11UA • Editorial email: sfx@futurenet.com Customer services UK: 0844 848 28 52 • International contact: +44 (0)1604 251 045 Subs info: visit myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/sfx or check out page 32 for the latest offer

still remember tuning into *The X-Files* the first time it aired on BBC Two. It was a profound moment in my sci-fi education. Mulder and Scully's investigations immediately felt like something new and fresh, and proved to be a turning point in the history of genre TV. Not only was The X-Files unashamed to deal with alien conspiracies, liver-scoffing blokes with elastic limbs and human fluke worms, it was that rare beast that crossed over to be embraced by the mainstream - a sci-fi show that everybody adored. Initially, at least...

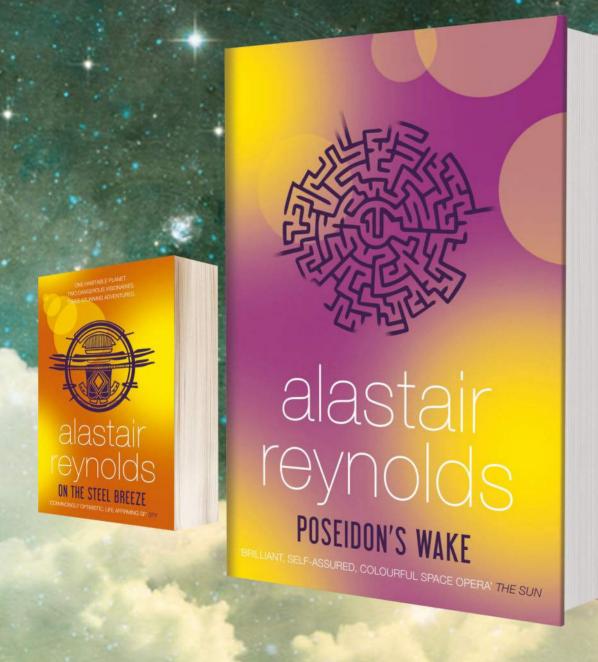
I fell out of love with The X-Files over the course of two sub-par movies and the convoluted later seasons, so I was initially as sceptical as Scully about the show's return. But the more I learn about it, I'm getting really excited. That's why we've launched an investigation to find out everything we can about the new season, and even nabbed a few words with David Duchovny himself.

This is also an issue tinged with sadness, as we've had to bid farewell to two legends of sci-fi and fantasy -Patrick Macnee and Sir Christopher Lee. You can read our tributes to the genre-defining stars on page 12 and page 62, respectively. And ahead of the publication of Sir Terry Pratchett's final Discworld novel in September, we're celebrating the career of one of our all-time favourite authors - we hope you enjoy our special PTerry supplement, free inside this issue.



Richard Edwards, Editor @RichDEdwards

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### "Kiera starts to consider her own needs. She needs a new goal. And that's her trying to find her way back home"

indoctrinated in this world that she came from and saw things in really black and white terms, to someone that could really embrace the nuances of politics and the other side of the coin that Liber8 represented. And in a way, we always wanted to do that but we could really push that agenda knowing that Rachel could pull it off."

Barry teased that some of the big reveals planned for the six-episode season four, which will air early in 2016 on Syfy UK, were planted by Kiera, Alec Sadler (Erik Knudsen/ William B Davis) and Matthew Kellog (Stephen Lobo) way back in season one. And considering that Kiera not only killed an

> alternate version of herself but essentially joined forces with Liber8 – the terrorists/freedom fighters she followed back to 2012 – during season three, the final season of *Continuum* will no doubt be the most explosive yet.

"At the end of season three, we alluded to the fact that in having come full circle with her assessment of what is best for the future, Kiera is now making choices that really undermine her ability to get back to her family," offers Barry. "We thought that was a very honourable place for her to get to as a character and a really satisfying journey that played out well at the end of season three."

Moving into season four, Barry says now that Kiera has

reconsidered what the future holds and is seeing things from an entirely different perspective, the emotional elements of the story will go to a higher level too.

"This isn't really super-spoilery but it fits into where I think that everyone expected the show to be heading in season four, which is, now that she feels her mission has been accomplished, Kiera wants to see if there is a way to get back to what she is missing. And that's her family and her son. We really felt like at that point, Kiera can start to consider her own needs. She needs a new goal, a new mission. And that's her trying to find her way back home."

Asked point blank if there was a happy ending for Kiera at the end of *Continuum*, Barry quips, "You'll have to watch the sixth episode of season four to find out."

Continuum airs early 2016 on Syfy UK, and from 4 September on Showcase Canada.



on 25 June 2015, aged 93. SFX

# Patrick Ness has delivered YA with

THE REST OF US JUST LIVE HERE

# Ordinary People



New novel turns the spotlight on the normies

ED UP WITH YA TALES THAT chronicle the plight of some Chosen One destined to save the world? Then The Rest Of Us Just Live Here, the new novel from Chaos Walking creator Patrick Ness, is for you.

"I was thinking that so many YA books are about the Chosen One, but what about the ones who feel like 'I just want to have lunch without those other ones blowing up high school again'?" Ness says. "It's about the un-chosen ones. The ones who get left behind, who also have really sweet and really moving stories to tell."

Mikey is your everyday high-schooler beset by everyday problems. The only difference: Mikey's best friend is 1/4 god and his world has been besieged by supernatural nasties. "It's told in two streams," Ness explains. "In the chapter heading you get a typical YA adventure story of the Indie Kids fighting the Immortals. The rest of the chapters are about kids in calculus class

or at lunch. The typical YA adventures are always in the background."

But with so much excitement going on elsewhere, what makes Mikey's story so interesting? "If you're 17 and you're in love and you don't know if they love you back it feels just as huge as saving the world," says Ness. "There's a point in the book where Mikey says he always feels like the one they could do without. The book is about that beautifully painful moment where you find out that people do value you. In the midst of the Indie Kids saving the world from the Immortals."

"Look, I'll be honest. I f\*\*\*ing hate that movie. I was pushed into doing that movie. The script wasn't any good. And I didn't want to do something that I was

Channing Tatum isn't pulling his punches.

SCI-FACT! Filming has already finished on a big-screen adaptation of Patrick Ness's A Monster Calls



- a series order at Starz. Bryan Fuller will act as showrunner while Neil Gaiman will contribute.
- Bradley Cooper, Graham King and Todd Phillips adapting Dan Simmons's HYPI Syfy. Cooper is a big fan and previously wrote a movie script on spec.
- New TERMINATOR 1 show that will tie into Genisys still in the works.
- Eight-episode prologue series for big-screen adap of THE STAND lined up at Showtime.
- Harry Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle teaming up to solve supernatural crimes on DOYLE. Stephen Mangan will play Conan Doyle
- **HBO** developing comedy about the "minutiae of daily existence in a sci-fi afterlife" with The Office's Greg Daniels.
- Heroes creator Tim Kring writing pilot p for ABC about a man who wakes up from a coma with supernatural abilities
- Michael Dorn's Star Trek TV pitch, CAPTAIN WORF, may not have the go-ahead. Come on Paramount, make it so!

a fan of since I was a kid"

When it comes to GI Joe: Rise Of The Cobra

### MY SCI-FI

### Jemaine Clement

The Flight Of The Conchords star reveals his sci-fi and fantasy favourites



#### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY COMIC

I liked Tharg's Future Shocks in 2000 AD. They're still an influence on this anthology show we're writing now for HBO. I haven't read one for probably 25 years, but at the time they were mind-blowing.

#### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY TV

I loved the alien stuff in *Mork & Mindy*. I especially loved the episode where he accidentally joins the Ku Klux Klan and he doesn't know what they're about, he just thinks they get together. And then they reveal they're racists and he doesn't like that, because he's an alien, and they take off their hoods and he's done a thing where he's changed them to all different races. I thought that was pretty triumphant - as a mixed race person, that was very satisfying to me.

### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY BOOK

The Earthsea Trilogy, Ursula Le Guin. It was about this wizard, I think his name was Sparrowhawk. It's pretty nerdy. And it had an interesting thing of being responsible with their magic, because if you do something, everything had an effect, like if you create a creature here, perhaps one dies somewhere else, so you have to be careful with your magic. I like that. I remember trying to read The Lord Of The Rings. I wasn't good at sports when I was a teenager and I was like, "I'm supposed to be playing Dungeons & Dragons and reading Lord Of The Rings, like the other guys that aren't good at sports", but I never really clicked with them.

#### FAVOURITE SF/FANTASY GUILTY PLEASURE

The Tomorrow People! I've got one of the seasons in a box set, I can't even remember which season it is. Yeah, I'll still crack out that every so often.

What We Do In The Shadows is available on DVD, Blu-ray and digitally now.

The Rest Of Us Just Live Here is published on 6 August.



### IT'S BETTER THAN THE BOOK

When a wave of violent animal attacks starts to sweep the planet, a renegade zoologist is thrust into the race to unlock the pandemic's mystery before there's no place left for humans to hide. That's the chilling premise of the new television thriller Zoo, which is based on James Patterson's bestselling book. "People always say the book is better than the movie," Patterson tells Red Alert. "In this case, I think the series is going to be better than the book. It's thrilling. It's exciting. It's James Patterson meets Michael Crichton meets Stephen King, because it has suspense and adventure, as well as a little horror."

### THE ANIMALS ARE REVOLTING

Don't be fooled by the title of the series. "This is not a show about zoos," reveals Patterson. "It's about the world. In this fable, a couple of people start to notice that there are more attacks against humans. Of course, they are called crazy – but then it becomes more and more obvious that something very strange is happening. In Los Angeles, a couple of lions escape from the zoo. That's a little piece of the story, but a tourist



bus is attacked in Rio de Janeiro and other things happen with other animals elsewhere in the world, which is when the mystery widens. There's a little science behind the mystery, too. There's a lot going on."

### TRUTH INSPIRED FICTION

What sparked Patterson's imagination and inspired the animal attack tale? "In the last couple of years, I noticed that I was reading a lot of stories about animals acting in particularly strange ways," the author admits. "There were more alligator attacks in Florida and in Georgia than ever before, and there was the crazy situation with fish jumping into the boats in Michigan. Did you see that story? It was unbelievable. You watch things like that and think, 'What is going on here?' That's where the idea for Zoo came from."

### IT'S A GLOBAL ADVENTURE

Zoo is an intense global thriller that travels around the world to cities including Tokyo, Paris, Rio de Janeiro and Mobile, Alabama. However, the action was all shot on location in and around New Orleans. "It's all Louisiana," explains Patterson. "It's unbelievable. There's a long scene in tall grass with lions and you'll swear it's been shot in Africa, but it's not. There are scenes set in Boston that feel very real, but they are shot around New Orleans, too. I thought the Louisiana countryside was full of shacks and nothing else, but I was wrong."

### THE STORY IS NEW

If you're a fan of the book, you won't necessarily know too many spoilers from the new series, which airs on CBS in the States. "The show is going to be different to the book," admits Patterson, talking in a quiet corner of a Beverly Hills hotel. "The main characters – Jackson, Chloe and Abraham, played by an international cast including American actor James Wolk, French actress Nora Arnezeder and rising British star Nonso Anozie – are the same, but we've added some new characters to the mix. The story is going to change a lot, which is excellent."

Zoo is currently airing on CBS. It airs on Sky 1 in the UK later this year.





### Witness This

Avalanche's newest open world gets wasted by War Boys

HE FOLK AT SWEDISH GAME studio Avalanche are no stranger to open worlds, having put together their own *Just Cause* franchise to critical aplomb. But with its upcoming foray into the wasteland of *Mad Max: Fury Road*, the proposition of taking on someone else's IP is very different.

"The key is to make it a game catered to gamers," says Christofer Sundberg, the studio's co-founder. "You need to have that mindset, and then add that layer of what the fans really want on top of that. Obviously a lot of car combat, and that's been the biggest hook for this game, but they also want a wasteland experience."

With some hands-on time under our belts we can attest to this wider world sense filtering through loud and clear, from the need to source water to keep Max's health bar topped up, to scrounging tins of dog food for sustenance.

Then there are those car fights. Convoys rumble around the expansive open world which you can identify from far off thanks to the atmospheric dust clouds they churn up. Max feels lumbering on foot but get him into his customisable Magnum Opus car and he's more than capable. You can harpoon enemy vehicles, peeling off armour like an oily onion before

taking out the squishy War Boys within with some well placed slow motion shotgun blasts. Those War Boys, by the way, will clamber onto your car and actively try to get at you, so preparing for a vehicle showdown with defensive spike placements and the like is essential.

Back to that on-foot combat, though. It appears as though Avalanche is taking inspiration directly from another tie-in under the Warner Bros publishing umbrella. Start flinging fists around and it's impossible not to think of *Batman: Arkham Asylum* and its sequels. The emphasis is on counter attack timings, direction and meaty impacts over complexity or mechanical mastery.

"For us it was important to develop a good melee system that could evolve over time," says Sundberg.

"In this day and age when games need to cater to such a wide audience and where there are also more casual players... I mean I'm not particularly interested in melee games. I don't feel that *need* to be better. For me the world is what's interesting. So we needed to develop a system that could cater to players like me."

Mad Max rides historic on PS4, Xbox One and PC from 4 September.

### LIFE AFTER FLASH

### Gordon's Alive!

### New doc to explore legacy of cult film

• Mike Hodges' classic Flash Gordon celebrates its 35th anniversary this year, but the saviour of the universe has never been more popular, with rumours of a Matthew Vaughn-helmed reboot and star Sam J Jones popping up again as Flash in comedy sequel Ted 2. No better time then for independently-produced documentary Life After Flash to take a return trip to Mongo.

"I loved the idea that the film could still be so iconic now and how one actor could still be known 35 years later for this one character," says director Lisa Downs. "As a fan myself it's something that I would want to see."

The doc will be part making-of, part look at the life of actor Sam J Jones. "It certainly covers the film, because if you're interviewing all these amazing actors it would be silly not to listen to their stories. But the majority is Sam: what he went through to get the film, how it changed his life and who he is as a person. We know him as Flash but we don't know him as Sam."

The film is being crowdfunded on Indiegogo until late July, to help fund overseas travel for interviews. "It's been a struggle because it's a passion project which we're doing around other work, so we'd love to have the funds to shoot for a good period of time. Sam has this second job in Mexico where he protects VIPs from assassinations across the border so we want to go and film that and film his life, so it's not just a top level interview. We want you to really get to know him."

Contribute to the Life After Flash fund at indiegogo.com/projects/life-after-flash.







#### SCI-FACT!

Mockingjay is one page shorter than Catching Fire, but will be almost twice as long on the big screen.



### FREEZE FRAI

### THIS MONTH:

Katniss and co march on the Capitol in The **Hunger Games:** Mockingjay -Part 2



 After her successful rescue at the end of Mockingjay – Part 1 Annie Cresta and Finnick waste no time tying the knot.



• Effie, all dolled up, decks Katniss out in her stylish armour. They appear to be in a Capitol building.



The schematics behind Katniss show The Nut – District 2's military base where many of the Capitol's weapons are stored.



 Katniss and Gale are in the audience at this District 2 rally, where they're finally united in rebellion against the Capitol.



Katniss dances with her sister Prim. So it's not all misery and death. then.



 Game Of Thrones' Gwendoline Christie plays Commander Lyme. a former victor who allies District 2 with the rebellion.



 Katniss takes aim in the Capitol with an audience of ordinary folk at her back, but who is she aiming at?



Seems Peeta has recovered from his brainwashing and gives Katniss a big hug instead of a throttling.



 Gale pulls his Serious Face. In the book he develops some controversial military strategies.



President Snow is confident to the very end: "Make no mistake, the game isn't over."



He's not kidding, the Capitol is booby trapped with "pods" – this one unleashes a torrent of deadly black liquid...



...which is probably why Finnick says "Welcome to the 76th Hunger Games".

### JORDAN



Still not convinced that splitting Mockingjay in two was the right decision, but this

trailer looks pleasingly actionpacked and I like the idea of a raid on a booby-trapped Capitol.

### RICH



It's a by-the-numbers trailer, but aside from the awkward folk dancing at the beginning, I like the

look of this. I think Part 1 is underrated, so I'm confident the series will go out with a bang.

#### DAVE



The series did so much treading water with Mockingjay -Part 1 it deserves a junior swimming

certificate. The trailer certainly teases a powerful postapocalyptic punch-up.

### TARA



Lionsgate is still clearly holding back the good stuff, but seeing Katniss and co taking the fight to

Snow looks suitably epic. I love what Francis Lawrence has done with the franchise so I'm all in.

### IAN



I've always found the Hunger Games franchise a bit trad, but this does feel impressively gritty and epic. That wave of weird,

tarry black liquid looks a little bit on the ropey side, though.



AFTERLIFE #106

### **Jamison Newlander**

Alan Frog in The Lost Boys



AMISON NEWLANDER WAS 15 years old when he was cast as Alan Frog, the quirky and stoic brother of fellow vampire hunter Corey Feldman in The Lost Boys. After appearing in the 1988 remake of The Blob, he earned a BFA in acting at New York University. Jamison has written and directed several plays and short films, and appeared in scenes in Lost Boys: The Tribe (2008), and Lost Boys: The Thirst (2010), in which he and Feldman reprised their roles as Edgar and Alan Frog. He appears in the upcoming film Bone Tomahawk with Kurt Russell.

#### WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY ALAN AGAIN?

Yes, I would because I think we could do a great fourth movie, or a TV show maybe. It could be me and Corey chasing a bunch of hot young vampires, and maybe we could have some of the other guys come back or Kiefer could make an appearance.

#### **WOULD ANY OF ALAN'S SKILLS OR ATTRIBUTES HAVE BEEN USEFUL IN REAL LIFE?**

I was very young at the time, and the stuff that Joel [Schumacher, director] was doing to get us to be tough and get into character helped me become more thick-skinned. I walked away from the movie a little tougher for having played Alan.

### WHAT WOULD ALAN BE DOING NOW?

I think Alan would still be at it and very hi-tech. Whether it was just vampires or it went even deeper now, he'd be pushing the boundaries.

#### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU THINK WAS UNFINISHED ABOUT HIS STORY?

Right now, he's wrapped up kind of nicely. With The Thirst he went on a journey to the vampire's side and came back. Not that there's not more for him to do.

### DID YOU GET ANY SOUVENIRS FROM THE SET?

▶ Somewhere I have my army fatigues. I also took my set chair seatback with my name on it. What else would they have done with it?

### IS THERE ANYTHING FROM THE FILM YOU WISH WAS REAL?

At the time I wished that Jami Gertz was in love with me and not with Jason Patric!

### WHAT WOULD IT SAY ON THE CHARACTER'S GRAVESTONE?

Alan May Be Back.



- return for season three on Sky Atlantic, yay!
- **BITTEN** also renewed for a third season, boo!
- WARD PINES will likely feature a totally new cast if picked up for a second season.
- "Hardhome" director Miguel Sapochnik and Lost's Jack Bender among the helmers for season six.
- Punisher: War Zone's Lexi Alexander directing an episode of ARRO season four.

### **CASTING CALL**

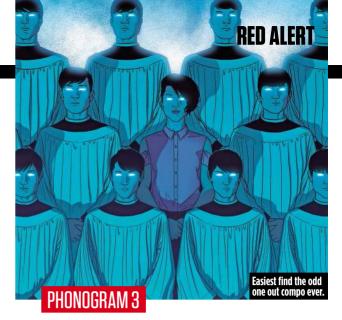
- The Walking Dead's Jon Bernthal cast as the Punisher for **DAREDEVIL** season two.
- Jessica Lucas signs on to play Tigress in GOTHAM season two.
- Rebecca Mader and Sean Maguire promoted to regulars for the fifth season of ONCE UPC
- Corey Hawkins cast as comic character Heath season six.
- Amélie's Dominique Piñon will play Mater Raymond in the second season of OUTLANDER.

"That can't happen until both Bob [Gale] and I are dead. And then I'm sure they'll do it, unless there's a way our estates can stop it"

> A Back To The Future remake? Over Robert Zemeckis's dead body

#### SCI-FACT!

Kieron Gillen used to work for SFX sister mag PC Gamer and recently wrote Marvel's Darth Vader comic.



### **Girl Talk**

### Kieron Gillen returns to his Immaterial World

S KIERON GILLEN SAYS. THE Immaterial Girl herself is not the only one to become "unstuck in time". For after placing it on hold in 2012 to concentrate first on Young Avengers and lately The Wicked + The Divine, he and Jamie McKelvie are finally returning to Phonogram.

"All three *Phonograms* are period pieces." Gillen tells Red Alert, noting that first series Rue Britannia took place

> in 2005 while its successor The Singles Club occurred over a single night in 2006. "There's been a temptation to future proof some of the ideas, now knowing more of the way culture has flowed, but I've generally resisted it because that'd be cheating." Moving forward three years, the story finds

Immaterial Girl Emily Aster's past coming back to haunt her. "In 2001, she sold half her personality for power," explains Gillen. "Since then that other half -

the depressive, dowdy side - has haunted every mirror. That power has led Emily to become the head of a Phonomancer's coven. In 2009, the deal

starts to go wrong..." Although The Wicked + The Divine was

recently optioned for the small screen, Gillen insists that he and McKelvie were never

interested in creating a blueprint for another medium with Phonogram. "We wanted to make something that was aggressively comics!" he says. "The wisdom then - and to some degree now was to do this comic as a glorified Hollywood pitch. But we're comics purists, and made Phonogram deliberately awkward and dense, basically as a dare to any director who thinks they can adapt it. So do you feel lucky, punk?" 553

Phonogram: The Immaterial Girl is published by Image Comics on Wednesday 12 August.



### The influential Star Wars companion piece is becoming a feature

ATIENCE IS A VIRTUE. Filmmaker Roger Christian has waited 35 years for audiences' tastes to change so he can turn his short film Black Angel into a fully-fledged epic fantasy feature. Specially commissioned by George Lucas, the short film was a 25-minute theatrical companion piece to The Empire Strikes Back during its original 1980 release.

"Fox had put some short film about policemen going on holiday with Star Wars, which George thought alienated his audience," reveals Christian, responsible for the Oscar-winning aesthetics on Star Wars and Alien. "So George had requested that a film be specially made to accompany Empire and they were trying to find a script.

"By pure chance I'd written Black Angel and couldn't get it made. I was sitting watching Alien being sound mixed and the head of Fox came over to ask what I was doing. I told him about my script and after reading it he said, 'I need to send this to George!' The immediate reply was for me to make the film the way I wanted with no intrusion."

Shot in seven days within remote locales of Scotland, the film concerns the knight Sir Maddox who seeks revenge against the perpetrator who brought devastation to his land and people. After meeting a maiden who saves him from drowning, Sir Maddox vows to free her from the enigmatic

Black Knight - culminating in a battle between the two. This sequence consequently had an impact on Luke's nightmarish Dagobah duel in Empire.

For his \$15 million feature film Christian has already secured Blade Runner veteran Rutger Hauer and Lord Of The Rings' John Rhys-Davis. The director promises to go back to the old days of gritty realism. "Game Of Thrones and LOTR have made the arena possible for me to get this made now. I really want the audience to smell the blood, sweat and tears of this film."

Black Angel is due to open in 2016.

### BAD COMPANY: FIRST CASUALTIES

### The Art Of War

### Brett Ewins' zarjaz legacy lives on

 Initially a possible collaboration between Rufus Dayglo and Brett Ewins, new Bad Company series First Casualties has turned into a tribute to the latter after he passed away earlier this year. Starting in 2000 AD Prog 1950, it will see penciller Dayglo joined by returning writer Peter Milligan and inker Jim McCarthy.

"Brett and I had started work on a Bad Company prequel idea around 2004, but due to his ill-health, it was shelved," Dayglo tells Red Alert. "Then two years ago, I talked to Peter about doing a Bad Company series where we could get it back to basics and do a war story. The idea was for Brett to act as art director as he couldn't draw it all. We finally got it together and had it approved, and sadly we lost Brett on the first day I started the series."

Set a decade after the conclusion of 2002's last Bad Company instalment, Danny Franks and some of the remaining members of Bad Company are now veterans, living out a medicated life in a vets' compound.



First published in 1986, the early Bad Company tales were influenced by the two World Wars and the Vietnam War, With Milligan describing current conflicts such as in the Middle East as "wars of illusions and lies". First Casualties takes its lead from the rapidly changing nature of warfare. "The wars the world finds

itself in now are even more complex." says Milligan. "The story involved our heroes trying to find the truth that lies behind their medicated fog of war. But in these post-modern times, the truth is a moveable feast."

Bad Company begins in 2000 AD Prog 1950 on 30 September.





### SPOTLIGHT

Pixar goes prehistoric with alt-history animation The Good Dinosaur



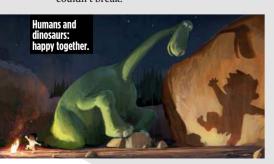
Over the last 20 years Pixar has got an awful lot of mileage from two words: "what if?" What if toys came to life when you weren't around? What if monsters were real? What if rats weren't super-gross? Their next toon, The Good Dinosaur, asks a "what if?" 65 million years in the making: what if the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs sailed clean past our planet?

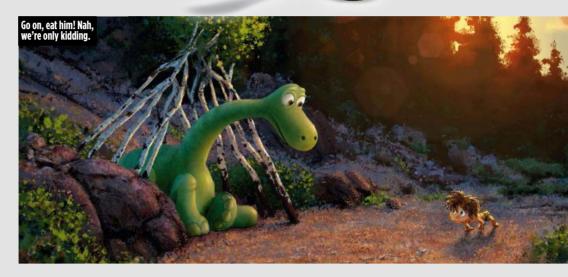
#### THE PARENT TRAP

Enter Arlo, a friendly Apatosaurus voiced by young Raymond Ochoa. Arlo is the littlest dino in a happy family of herbivore farmers, which in classic Bambi fashion means his Momma (Frances McDormand) and/or Poppa (Jeffrey Wright) aren't long for the world. Clumsy old Arlo follows up this family tragedy by taking a tumble into some nearby rapids, where he wipes out and washes up hundreds of miles away from home. Cue an arduous journey back to the Clawed-Tooth Mountains, upon which all manner of life lessons are waiting to be learned.

### JURASSIC BARK

But Arlo isn't alone on his trek. Shortly after setting off he bumps into Spot - a six-year-old cave boy who's more tail-chasing canine than cave-painting Homo sapien. Arlo and dinosaur kind have mastered the power of speech, but Spot has yet to progress beyond growls and whimpers. In the words of John Lasseter, it's a "boy and dog story, but the roles are reversed." Expect reluctant proximity, followed by cautious friendship, followed by the kind of bond even a flesh-hungry T-Rex couldn't break.





#### THE VOYAGE HOME

Naturally Spot isn't the only new face Arlo encounters on his journey. Pixar has created a menagerie of larger than life creatures including a family of friendly T-Rexes, vulture-like Pterodactyls, a Triceratops who acts as a spiritual guide for Arlo, and the blood-thirsty jerks of the dinosaur kingdom -Velociraptors. The Raptors will have feather-based haircuts modelled on certain footballers, to increase the scientific accuracy, and decrease reports of night terrors.

### **CRY ME A RIVER**

If 2015's other Pixar flick. Inside Out, has proven anything it's that: a) the animation supremos are back on their A-game; and b) they haven't lost their touch when it comes to causing leaky eyes. With Arlo and Spot estranged from their families The Good Dinosaur is loaded with more emotional landmines than a Nicholas Sparks novel.

### THE GRASS IS GREENER

Story may come first, but Pixar aren't ones to slack off when it comes to treating your peepers. The Good Dinosaur is taking Pixar's already impressive tech one step further with some astonishingly detailed foliage. In fact, we'd say it's the best-looking foliage you'll see without popping down to your local park and sticking your head in a bush. The hyper-realistic environments stand in contrast to the more cartoony appearance of Arlo, Spot and the film's dinos.

#### **BEHIND THE MIC**

It hasn't been plain sailing, however. Up co-director Bob Peterson departed in 2013, citing "story problems" and was replaced by Peter Sohn. The entire original voice cast was also recently replaced (minus Frances McDormand, who survived the extinction event). Usually this would set alarm bells ringing, but in Pixar we trust.

### WHEN'S IT OUT?

The Good Dinosaur opens on 27 November 2015.

et sci-fi news, reviews and features at gamesradar.com/sfx















































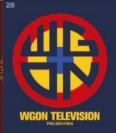








































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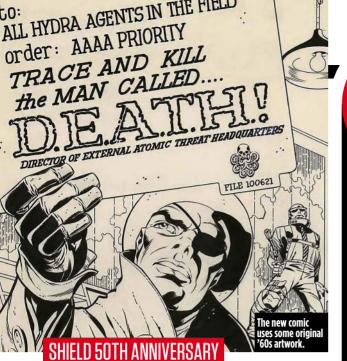
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the first five minutes.





### A Marvellous Milestone

Steranko, Kirby and Lee join birthday celebration

BOUT TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH anniversary with a special oversized issue, Marvel's central espionage organisation SHIELD, which first appeared in August 1965's Strange Tales #135, finds itself more popular than ever thanks to its prominent role in films like The Avengers. However, according to Mark Waid, who pens Marvel's SHIELD book, the cinematic success of Agent Coulson and co hasn't influenced their comic book incarnations.

"We have the freedom in comics to adapt from the TV show and the movies without sacrificing 50 years of continuity," he tells Red Alert. "The goal is always to make those fans welcome while still embracing Marvel history."

Also featuring contributions from Al Ewing and Stan Lee, *SHIELD #9* will see Waid "collaborating" with none other than Jack Kirby and Jim Steranko on a previously unpublished three-page sequence. "I'm lucky enough to be dialoguing over art that they produced in the 1960s that has never seen print before," he says. "And it's all folded into the main story for a seamless reading experience."

Illustrated by Lee Ferguson, "The Man Of DEATH" introduces a new villain, who dates back to SHIELD's formative days. "The title comes from Jack Kirby's original pitch for what became SHIELD in 1965," reveals Waid. "So he's a character who is simultaneously brand-new, 50 years old and 550 years old."

With the nature of terrorism and international crime having changed significantly, the threats that SHIELD now faces have also been updated. "The storylines are absolutely influenced by real-world events," says Waid. "A good example of that is SHIELD #11's guest-starring of a surprise long-time Marvel character."

SHIELD #9 is published on 19 August.

### NEWS WARP ALL FACT, NO FILLER



- Composer JAMES (above) has died at the age of 61 after crashing his plane in California. Horner made his name with a series of iconic scores in the '80s. including Aliens, The Wrath Of Khan and The Search For Spock. He won an Oscar in 1997 for his Titanic music, worked with James Cameron again on Avatar, and more recently scored The Amazing Spider-Man. Taken from the world too soon, cinema won't be the same without him.
- PRIVER SONG to star in a series of audios for Big Finish alongside Eighth Doctor Paul McGann.
- Ann Leckie's Ancillary Sword wins the LOCUS AWARD for best SF novel, while Joe Abercrombie picks up best YA novel for Half A King.
- Georges Méliès and Hayao Miyazaki inducted into the SCIENCE
- ▶ HEROES: REBORN and ASSASSIN'S CREED comics coming from Titan.
- Radio 4's MARTIAN CHRONICLES adap wins International Radio Award.
- HUMANS pulls in Channel 4's highest ratings for original drama for more than 20 years.
- Adam Nimoy making doc FOR THE LOVE OF SPOCK about father Leonard.

"I certainly directed those scenes with the intention that no one would know. [I had] a few heads up and a few unpleasant conversations" Director Alan Taylor on the trailers blowing

Terminator Genisys' biggest twist.

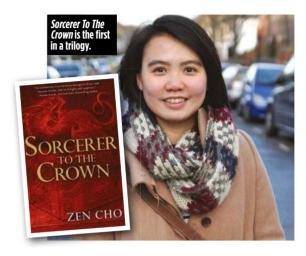
#### SCI-FACT!

of scathing reviews of
Agents Of SHIELD for The
Hollywood Reporter.

### **NEW AUTHOR**

### Zen Cho

Susanna Clarke meets PG Wodehouse in this magical debut



### WHAT WOULD YOU WRITE AS SORCERER TO THE CROWN'S COVER BLURB?

▶ In Regency London, Zacharias Wythe is England's first African Sorcerer Royal... and that's only the first of his problems. When he meets runaway orphan Prunella Gentleman – a female magical prodigy, of all things – his problems are about to get even worse, for Prunella has just stumbled upon English magic's greatest discovery in centuries.

### HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT BUILDING THE WORLD?

I stole all the things I liked about Regency romances and PG Wodehouse's comedies, spun them together with magic, and added a soupçon of postcolonial flavour.

### IS THERE ANYTHING UNIQUE ABOUT MAGIC IN YOUR BOOK?

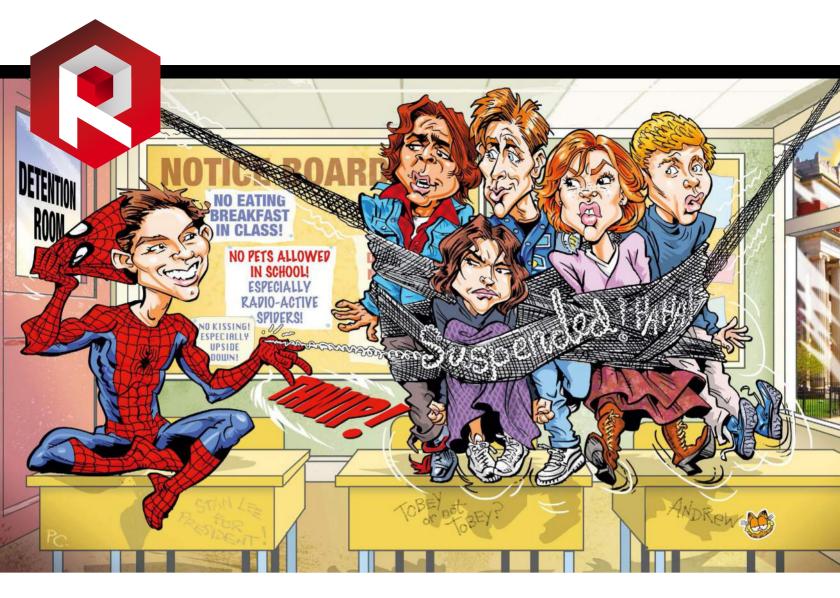
Like any other resource, magic breeds politics. In *Sorcerer To The Crown* a whole hierarchy has grown up around the performance of magic, which is largely controlled by the Royal Society of Unnatural Philosophers – a society that admits only male thaumaturges, of course. The main focus of England's thaumaturgical squabbles is familiars – magical creatures, now extremely scarce, who

swell the power and importance of the few mortal magicians they agree to serve. Such magicians are called sorcerers, but Zacharias is a sorcerer without a familiar...

### WHICH SF/FANTASY AUTHORS WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE COMPARED TO IN A DREAM REVIEW?

▶ I don't particularly want to be compared to other authors as it can be a lot to live up to! But some authors who have been big influences on me are Terry Pratchett, Diana Wynne Jones, Geoff Ryman, Susanna Clarke and Karen Lord.

Sorcerer To The Crown is published by Macmillan on 10 September.



# DEVELOPS DEVELOPS

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future

### TRIANGULATION! BERMUDA TRIANGLE

Nothing says '70s cryptophenomena quite like the Bermuda Triangle. Lurking between the Florida Straits, Bermuda and Puerto Rico, this shuddersome, compasstwirling region of the Caribbean is said to be responsible for untold disappearances of planes and ships across the decades. Now Skydance Productions – home of Terminator Genisys – are prepping a big-screen take with a screenplay by Prince Of Persia's Doug Miro and Carlo Bernard. Universal has a rival project in development, written by

Ouija's Juliet Snowden and Stiles White, while Warner Bros have had their own version simmering since 2013. Yes, it's a triangle of Bermuda Triangle movies. Expect Hollywood itself to vanish in a vortex of inexplicable weirdness.

### CHINESE ROCKS! BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

Still reeling from the news that **Dwayne Johnson** dares to star in a remake of John Carpenter's cult '80s action flick? You're not alone. The Rock is equally rocked. "I loved reading the reactions from the fans, that they were so

polarised - I'm the same way," he tells Entertainment Weekly. "My response is: know that I come to the project with nothing but love and respect for the original, which is why we want to bring on John Carpenter." Yes, Johnson wants to reach out to the director of the '86 original, which starred Kurt Russell as trucker Jack Burton embroiled in a centuries-old mystical conflict in San Francisco's Chinatown. Carpenter reveals he knew nothing of the planned remake until the news broke but he's suitably zen about it all: "I'm doing fine. I didn't write the original one - no harm, no foul."

### AWESOME MIXING IT!

### GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL 2

Seems the Guardians sequel will drill a little deeper into our favourite bunch of A-holes. "I think it's a more emotional movie," writer and director James Gunn tells Collider. "It's both a bigger movie and a smaller movie because we focus more intensely on some of the characters. We get to learn a lot about fathers in the second movie." Chris Pratt is already sold on Gunn's vision for the cosmic encore. "I will say that his pitch and his idea legitimately put tears in my eyes," he tells Digital Spy. "It



#### SPIDEY UNMASKED!

### SPIDER-MAN

Meet your new, authentically teenage Wall-crawler: Britain's own Tom Holland will sling the webs and the quips in 2017's Spider-Man reboot (and, rumour insists, scuttle into the Marvel Cinematic Universe in next year's Captain America: Civil War). There's a helmer confirmed, too: Jon Watts, director of horror film Clown and indie thriller Cop Car. Intriguingly, Marvel supremo Kevin Feige reveals the new movie will take inspiration from such '80s teen fare as Pretty In Pink and The Breakfast Club. "It's a soap opera in high school," he tells Zap2It. "Not that we can make a John Hughes movie - only John Hughes could - but we're inspired by him, and merging that with the superhero genre in a way we haven't done before excites us... In high school, everything feels like life or death. The stakes are high at that age." So that means Simple Minds are frontrunners for the soundtrack, then...

is so good, it's so good. And I cannot wait to get started on it and I cannot wait for people to see what he's going to pull off with the second movie." Gunn may have an entire galaxy to play with but in one respect he's dialling it back: "We actually have less characters in Guardians Of The Galaxy 2 than we have in 1 because everything is just getting too sprawling and too crazy for me in these superhero comic book movies."

#### SHARK! SHARK!

### MEG

Call it the Jurassic World effect. Yes, ravenous prehistoric beasts are clearly cinema's next big thing - and, in the case of this particular Carcharodon Megalodon, a jolly big thing indeed. Steve Alten's novel of an ancient, super-sized shark terrorising the Californian coastline has been screenbound since 1997, only to drift like a sun-blasted carcass on the broiling seas of Development Hell (at one point Guillermo del Toro was set to be spooning the chum). Now Warner Bros will finally bring it to the movies with a screenplay by The Manchurian Candidate's Dean Georgaris. Hostel's Eli Roth is attached to direct and word is the bloody, beach-clearing action will switch to Chinese waters in a shameless bid to woo the Eastern box office. Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water... No, let's face it, it's never safe to go back in the water.

#### DREAM PROJECT!

#### **SANDMAN**

Imagine a world where Jason Statham is playing the pale and windswept king of dreams, givin' it sahm knuckles up the 'ooter as tanker trucks fireball in slo-mo. Relax - it's not this reality. The big-screen version of Neil

Gaiman's Sandman saga will be a faithfully fist-free zone, vows producer - and potential director - Joseph Gordon-Levitt. "It was actually one of the things that Neil Gaiman said to me," he tells MTV. "He said 'Don't have punching.' Because he never does. If you read the comics, Morpheus doesn't punch anybody... It's going to be a grand spectacular action film, but one that relies on none of those same old ordinary clichés. So that's why it's taking a long time to write, but it's going to be really good." Don't look for the film to slot into the upcoming Warner Bros DC pantheon - it'll be brought to the screen by sister studio New Line Cinema.

### **ENTERPRISING!**

#### STAR TREK BEYOND

And yes, that's the confirmed title, once again defiantly colon-free. Director Justin Lin reveals that the new movie will see Starfleet's finest finally embarking on their fabled five-year mission. "As great as JJ's films were, there's still a lot to be mined from these characters," he tells Deadline. "What we experienced in the TV show hasn't been touched on yet. That sets up an opportunity for exploration and the deeper you go, the more you are examining humanity." And this time the mandate is truly on strange new worlds, new life and new civilisations. "It's all new and fresh. The Klingons, Romulans and other species are great, but it's time to go further. It has been fun to focus on creating whole new worlds and species." And stars Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto will be exploring the final frontier for the forseeable: they've just renegotiated their deals and now have an option on a fourth Star Trek adventure. Prepare the whales!

### ALSO BURNING



RATT signed for Sony's

generational starship

(above) and CH

romance Passengers... DreamWorks adapting **MICHAEL CRICHTON's** miniaturisation tale Micro... MICI KEATON starring in comic adap Imagine Agents... KATH VATERSTON and EZRA Potter spin-off Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them... MICH BAY to bring us highconcept adventure Time Salvager... SETH ON no longer directing Uncharted videogame adap for Monster... Lucy 2 in development... ARIA ED joining MICI NDER and Assassin's Creed... DAVID TENNANT joining voice cast of Chew... Disney moving ahead with Maleficent 2...

JACK HUSTON no longer starring in The Crow... The Chronicles Of Narnia: The Silver Chair script complete... CHIWETEL EJIOFOI the frame for Baron Mordo in Doctor Strange... Power Rangers arriving 13 January 2017 with DEAN ISRAELITE directing... CHRIS RTH joining Ghostbusters reboot... **STEVEN S DEKNIGHT** joining the *Transformers* brains trust... Warner Bros adapting NAC IK's Uprooted... Disney expanding Fantasia's "Night On Bald Mountain" segment into live action movie... CHIN HAN joining Independence Day: Resurgence... NIKOLAJ CEL finally - possibly - bringing STEPHEN KING's The Dark Tower to the screen...

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### Butterfly Mind

### David Langford tries to focus on the matter in hand

henever I try to concentrate on writing this page, distractions flood in. Sometimes I wish I had the gall to write a column about writing a column, like that chap Tim Key who used to fill his page in The Independent with exciting thematic material like "How I Wrote This Column In A Café". and as his swan song got two whole columns out of how, presumably through popular editorial demand, he'd no longer be writing the column. But Langford is made of sterner stuff.

Where was I? My SF newsletter *Ansible* is a regular distraction. Every month, dozens if not scores of readers expect their news fix, enlivened by one or even both of my famous jokes. In the recent issue #333, that fine cartoonist Steve Stiles contributed a picture of a cute puppy: "333, Mark of the Domestic House Pet!" But Puppies – see *SFX* 262 – are a painful subject right now.

Ansible brings me kudos but also some criticism. One SF professional who shall be nameless (and didn't like being named) called it an infantile

shitsheet; the *British Fantasy Newsletter* once complained it was "Not nearly as controversial as its reputation belies". Its US rival *File 770* announced: "As a newszine, it is the Emperor's New Clothes", an accolade I was proud to publish.

Similarly, the *File 770* website masthead now carries the blurb "...the 770 blog, that wretched hive of scum and villainy..." – from John C Wright, who thanks to Sad and Rabid Puppy rigging of the Hugo nominations had an unprecedented six items (one since disqualified) on this year's Hugo ballot. Which led to much discussion of his works at *F770* and elsewhere, the tone of which you can imagine from his response.

I didn't want to revisit the Puppies controversy, but the whole mess has provoked some interesting



debate on reforming the Hugo nominations process to prevent slate voting by an organised minority from dominating the ballot. By tradition you can nominate up to five items in each category – five novels for Best Novel, and so on – and the five most popular choices appear on the final ballot.

Many reformers suggested variations of the "4+6" plan: *four* nominations per category, with the top *six* becoming finalists. That stops a single slate from sweeping the nominations... but fandom's voting wonks soon deduced that if slates (formerly Just Not Done, Old Chap) become a standard tactic, "4+6" simply divides the final ballot between the two strongest slates.

Are the Hugos doomed to an eternity of party politics? Maybe not! An expert in electoral theory



- SF writer David Langford has had a column in SFX since issue one
- David has received 29 Hugo Awards throughout his career.
- His celebrated SF newsletter can be found at http://news.ansible.co.uk.
- He is a principal editor of the SF Encyclopedia at http:// www.sf-encyclopedia.com.

### Ansible brings me some kudos but also some criticism

devised a system that dilutes the effect of slates to ensure minorities can't easily rig the ballot. It's called "single divisible vote with least popular elimination" (SDV-LPE), nicknamed E Pluribus Hugo, and it's been explained at numbing length online. If you're curious, Google is your friend.

Meanwhile, though I should be writing my column for SFX, I keep being distracted by ebook production chores. It's fun converting my old books into digital form, and even more fun when people buy them. See also taff.org.uk for some freebies.

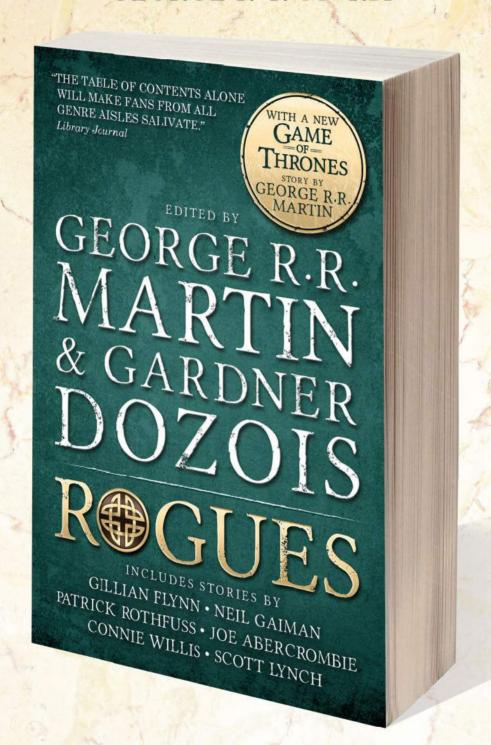
How, you ask, am I dealing with the nightmare of VAT on ebooks as introduced in January and horrifically described in SFX 258? Sshh! (Come inside these brackets where no one can hear us. I'm refusing to sell to the EU countries where problems arise. So far I've got away with this.) Vigorous campaigning against a tax regime so unfair to microbusinesses has admittedly produced some response from EU high-ups. Roughly: "Ooh yes, there's a problem but we can't do anything about it this year."

Meanwhile it looks as though I'll never finish this damned column.

David Langford used to have a butterfly mind but can't remember where he put it.

### "EVERYBODY LOVES A ROGUE"

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### Clever Dick

### Bonnie Burton lauds the predictions of Philip K Dick

umanoid robots! Iris recognition computers! Lab-grown artificial life!

These were once the fanciful ideas of science fiction author Philip K Dick, but as we all know they've become all too real. Skype calls, military drones and bad reality TV are the norm now.

The future according to Dick is so dead-on, it's downright creepy. There's a fine line between insane and insightful, and Dick mixed the two elements artfully in his writing.

I first started reading Dick when I was a teenager obsessed with Blade Runner, based on Dick's 1968 novel Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?.

After that I was hooked. I read anything he wrote — in total 44 novels and 121 short stories. For me, Dick wasn't just a talented writer; he was an uncanny futurist who could predict where technology, politics, capitalism and psychology were headed way before most other sci-fi authors.

In his 1956 short story
"Minority Report" – later made
into a movie, of course – we
are introduced to precognitive
humans who can predict

murders before they happen. While that isn't a reality yet, we did get some interesting tech that has since become a reality – hand gesture-based computer interfaces and eye iris recognition technology are both very real today.

"Minority Report" also predicted personallytargeted advertising, computer-driven cars and electronic news media (think iPads). Spider robots are being developed by the US military to give soldiers another way to survey areas that are too dangerous for humans to walk through for recon.

In 1980, the author made prophecies he thought would come true in the next 30 years. Many of the ideas, which sounded far-fetched at the time, are now coming true one by one thanks to advances in robotics, technology and medicine.



According to Dick, "The United States and the Soviet Union will agree to set up one vast metacomputer as a central source for information available to the entire world; this will be essential due to the huge amount of information coming into existence." While Dick did not anticipate the USSR's downward spiral, the World Wide Web clearly came true

"Computers used by ordinary citizens will transform the public from passive viewers of TV into mentally alert, highly trained, information-processing experts," Dick wrote. Thanks to YouTube and social media, citizens are now the world's watchdogs. We care when protests turn into violent riots. We take video when the police overstep their boundaries. And we turn Twitter



Our columnist Bonnie Burton, a San Franciscobased author, has written a number of books including her latest - *The Star Wars Craft Book*.

▶ Bonnie appears on the massive "Geek & Sundry" and "Stan Lee's World Of Heroes" YouTube channels.
▶ More of her writing can be found at www.grrl.com.

# Many of the ideas are now coming true one by one

hashtags into public outcry when we see an abuse of power. Each generation of computer users is becoming more and more skilled at finding and processing information.

Of course, not everything
Dick predicted came true. Dick
thought that by 1997, "The
first closed-dome colonies will
be successfully established
on Luna and Mars. Through
DNA modification, quasimutant humans will be created
who can survive under nonTerran conditions, ie alien
environments."

Sure we have space stations,

but off-world colonies for lucky humans who want to get away from a polluted Earth have yet to become a reality. And the only quasi-mutant humans we are familiar with are in the pages of Marvel and DC comics. Luckily, his prediction that by 2000 "an alien virus, brought back by an interplanetary ship, will decimate the population of Earth" did not come true.

So while we can all appreciate Dick's uncanny ability to foretell impressive advances in technology, space travel, robotics and science, I'm more than happy an alien virus hasn't wiped us out... yet.

The last time Bonnie was at an airport she used iris detection devices.

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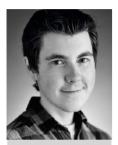


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Jordan Farley,

### Community Editor

The mailpod this month was dominated by your dedications to Sir Christopher Lee, with memories and tributes pouring in via all communication channels. Aside from that there were your musings on Sense8, Terminator Genisys' marketing strategies and the darkness of Dark Matter...

### STAR LETTER PRIZE!



After his near-death encounter with a movie cut-out that couldn't be bargained with, couldn't be reasoned with and absolutely would

not stop, ever, it only felt right to reward David Birch over there with a top prize from our space marineloving chums at the Black Library. Because, let's face it, in a few years time a T-1000 standee will travel back in time to finish the job. David wins a copy of Asurmen: Hand Of The Asuryan by Gav Thorpe Want to see your thoughts on the letters pages of SFX? Then send us your thoughts! Every old-school and new-fangled means of getting in touch with us is listed at up top there Dispatch words now!



### THE HARD SELL

Is it just me or has Terminator Genisys been very aggressive with its advertising campaign? Not only have I seen so many trailers and articles floating around that some very major-sounding plot points have been revealed long in advance of the film's release, but when I went to see Tomorrowland at the Vue cinema in Leicester the Terminator display in the lobby saw fit to end my night out before the previews had even finished by setting itself ablaze, causing an evacuation of the building and two fire engines to appear!

Arnie, if you're reading this I was already intending to see *Terminator Genisys*, but I won't if you take all the mystery out of the film or terminate the cinema first. By the way, I did get to see *Tomorrowland* the following week and can confirm that your review was spot on the money. I've been a subscriber for many years and can't see an end in sight. Keep up the good work.

David Birch, Leicester

It's viral marketing gone mad! What next, all the Sarah Connors in the phone book suddenly dropping dead?

THIS COULD BE YOU! EMAIL SFX@FUTURENET.COM

### HOT TOPIC SIR CHRISTOPHER LEE RIP

Saddened to hear that Sir Christopher Lee has died. Normally I don't comment on celebrity deaths apart from the odd RIP if their work has given me some happiness. In 2001, I had the pleasure of meeting him at a signing session with my then wife and 11-day old daughter. My daughter had been quiet in the queue until it was our turn. Then she burst into tears and Mr Lee turned to her and said, "She's obviously been watching far too many of my films." Thank you Christopher for all those great performances and being a cool person in real life. Both my daughter, who remains a huge fan, and myself, express our condolences to his family.

John Porter, email

Thank you for all the moments that you shared with us. Thank you for the roles that you played for us, all the songs that you sang for us. And thank you for all that you did for us in the Winter War. Farewell my friend, where the night is quiet and the sleep is rest. You will always be part of us.

Senja, Finland

Very sad to hear the news of Christopher Lee's passing. RIP to a true cinema legend – I hope he's on his way to the Grey Havens.

Jenny Davies, Facebook

I first saw Scars Of Dracula when I was 10. It was the first Christopher Lee film I saw and I loved it. I saw Lee in the cape with the fangs and thought, "Yes, that is how Dracula should look." Since then I've loved him in Star Wars, The Lord Of The Rings trilogy, The Wicker Man and countless other brilliant movies. I also listened obsessively to his

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"Christopher Lee lived a life most of us can only dream of"

sir Christopher Lee, 1922–2015.

heavy metal albums and YouTube videos of him reading poems. Christopher Lee lived a life most of us can only dream of. The world is a little less bright without him, RIP Sir Christopher Lee.

Ryan Turner, Facebook

So sad to lose another iconic actor so soon after Leonard Nimov. I have enjoyed all the films Sir Christopher has been in that I have seen recently, such as Sherlock Holmes And The Leading Lady. RIP Sir Christopher Lee.

Gary Pratt, Facebook

I can't remember the first film I saw him in. I can't remember

the last. I will always remember though, that the films I did see him in, he always added something a bit special. My favourite has to be him playing Scaramanga in The Man With The Golden Gun. You shall be missed.

Leon Coombs, Facebook

Goodnight, sweet Count. Scott Adrian Varnham, Facebook

Lee certainly was one of the most iconic actors of his generation, and a gentleman to boot. Turn to page 62 for our full tribute to someone whose career took in a remarkable number of top genre franchises. •>

### THIS MONTH IN **SCI-FI HISTORY**

**SFX 200** October 2010



**5 YEARS** AGO

Our 200th issue spectacular reveals 200 secrets of sci-fi's finest minds and imagines a world without Star Wars

**SFX 135** October 2005



**10 YEARS** AGO

We visit the Land Of The Dead, Neil Gaiman talks Mirrormask and there's 50 facts about Superman

**SFX 69 October** 2000



**15 YEARS** AGO

Kevin Bacon's Hollow Man sneaks onto the cover as Tobey Maguire is announced as the new Spider-Man

### **CA\$H IN THE AT-AT**

Reader Chris Middleton writes: "This is a bust (and lamp) of Maria from Metropolis. It's 20 inches high and has a bakelite-style base, a transparent Deco backplate, which is made from heavy plastic or resin, and the metalised bust itself, which may be plaster. On the base behind the robot is a brass lamp fitting. When the light is switched on, her eyes glow blue.

"I know nothing about its history: it may be a period item; it may be a

Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

> modern private commission or oneoff artist piece; it may have been made to tie in with a re-release of the movie, or for an event. I've no idea if it's the only one of its kind, or if several were made. Any info from Vectis appreciated!"

Adam Carter, Vectis film poster & memorabilia specialist, says: In the late 1990s, a company called Compulsion Gallery - who have since ceased trading - created a series of limited edition licensed pewter replicas of Maria the Robot from Metropolis. They were made of a high density resin, thermally plated in pewter, handpolished and lacquered.

What you have is called the False Maria Lamp featuring a bust of Maria. The effect of the backlight against the background and Maria's blue eves is very striking. Each of these replicas is incredibly hard to find and as such it is difficult to put a price on, but I wouldn't hesitate to put an estimate on yours at auction of £200-300 and simply seeing where it goes!

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo of your item (in focus, well lit against a plain background, and at least 1,000 pixels across) with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@futurenet.com, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

Vectis





Ian Berriman wants the BBC to resurrect a muchloved cult movie slot





ring back Moviedrome!
If you love exploring the obscure backwaters of cinema and are of a certain age, your heart probably just leapt in your chest. But for the benefit of younglings, I'd better explain.

Moviedrome was a slot which ran on BBC Two from 1988-2000. The format was simple, with a cult movie (not always a genre flick – though many were) or a themed double bill preceded by a short introduction. In the slot's first incarnation (1988 to 1994), these were provided by filmmaker Alex Cox. Later on (1997-2000), critic Mark Cousins took the baton.

I also hold David Pirie's 1973 book A Heritage Of Horror, Michael Weldon's Psychotronic Encyclopedia Of Film and Jonathan Ross's TV series The Incredibly Strange Film Show responsible for my enduring passion for cult cinema, but it was Moviedrome that actually gave me the chance to watch these movies rather than simply have them described to me. It was there I first witnessed Edward Woodward's fiery death in The Wicker Man, Grant Williams battling a spider in The Incredible Shrinking Man, and Ray Milland blinding himself in X: The Man With X-Ray Eyes.

Of course, the cinematic landscape has transformed in the last 15 years. Cult films have never been easier to access, thanks to DVDs, downloads and specialist channels. But in the face of all that data, it's easy to be swamped. There's still something to be said for the act of curating; still a place for a knowledgeable guide who can place a film into context, and provoke you to think about it in a different way. That's what made Alex Cox's tenure as host particularly satisfying.

### There's still a place for the act of curating

He always had a stimulatingly skewed perspective – even when he was dissing the movies! Decades later I still treasure battered photocopies of the booklets the BBC produced to accompany the series (and see http://bit.ly/moviedrome).

I'd love to see him take the gig on again, ideally on a channel with the reach of BBC Two. But failing that, maybe a slot on BBC Four, with someone like Mark Gatiss at the helm? If you're out there, Channel Editor Cassian Harrison, how about it?

### **LIGHTS OUT**

I enjoyed the pilot episode of Dark Matter, but felt I'd seen it all before. The crew of six all alone on a spaceship had shades of Blake's 7 about it. The dialogue and the amnesia plot has been mined in other sci-fi series. It was still enjoyable though, and good to have a new space-set sci-fi series. My only gripe was the darkness of the show (not thematically, but actually). They've mastered interstellar travel onboard their high-tech ship, yet our lighting technology is way ahead of theirs. Marauder travellers, please locate a light switch while searching for your identities.

Keith Tudor, Romsey

Maybe they should introduce some Light Matter for season two. Geddit? *Light* Matter. Oh, forget it.

### **20/20 VISION**

It wasn't clear whether the 20 Greatest Films of SFX's Lifetime (issue 262) represented the favourites of SFX staff or the most significant fantasy/horror/ science fiction pictures of the past 20 years. But if you intended to present the most important, there were a couple of major omissions from 1999. The Blair Witch Project may not have been the first "found footage" movie, but it's the one that really kicked off the mini-genre. Likewise Star Wars: The Phantom Menace wasn't cinema's first prequel but other film franchises that went back to beginnings in the 21st century (Batman Begins, Casino Royale, Star Trek) didn't give it a try before George Lucas had the cojones to dip his toe in the water (and get it bitten off).

Bryn Hughes, Wrexham



The list was subjective, no question; if we didn't like a film, it wasn't going in. But that doesn't mean we didn't take impact into account. In most cases, the two aligned. And *The Phantom Menace*: ha! Good one. Oh, wait, you aren't joking...

#### **XENO-PHOBIA**

I have been experiencing flashbacks involving Brandon Routh flying around in tights and a cape. The blame for this has to sit squarely with Neill Blomkamp and his plans for a fifth Alien film that won't be Alien 5. but will instead be a kind of sequel to Alien and Aliens, ignoring parts three and four. Didn't Bryan Singer do exactly the same thing with Superman Returns? Let's hope that unlike Singer's take on Superman the belated Alien instalment will be more than just a homage to a much-liked film series before the wheels came off.

Simon Hood, North Yorkshire

Lord knows we're overdue a good Alien film, but I'm not sure this is the right way to go about it. The series has resurrected characters before, and look how that turned out.

### WHERE'S THE SENSE IN THAT?

Can someone please tell the writers of *Sense8* that when we







Norrell set off a string of British fantasy shows? It's very much like your typical British period drama but with magic, like an adult Harry Potter. Could the success of this and the ongoing success of Doctor Who see the BBC start to take more risks with fantasy series? Perhaps a British TV adaptation of Narnia or The Golden Compass could do what the movies couldn't or even, shock horror, original fantasy shows could happen.

Robert Graham, Lincoln

Sadly, Strange & Norrell's less than stellar ratings may discourage the Beeb from making more SF shows the short term. But fear not, ITV is picking up the British telefantasy mantle with Beowulf, Jekyll And Hyde, Houdini & Doyle, The Frankenstein Chronicles and Peter & Wendy all in the works.

#### **TRUTH OR DARE**

Am I the only one not falling over myself to heap praise onto Netflix's Daredevil? I watched the series and found myself wondering why less people were seeing the obvious fact that they'd taken the first season of Arrow (complete with undertaking) and reskinned it. With a budget several times larger than anything on the CW I was hoping for more. Marvel may be king of the cinema right now but DC TV seems to be streaks ahead for inventive storytelling. Ben Warren, Hertfordshire

I've got a lot of love for Arrow, but Daredevil is leagues ahead, sorry Ben. And let's face it, Arrow just took Batman Begins and reskinned it.

say we want diversity in our SF, that doesn't mean we want more tropes. Let's just have a run down of the stereotypes and absurdity: an Indian character who is presented with a Bollywood dance display by her fiancé, an uptight Korean businesswoman who is also a martial arts expert, a version of London where Big Ben is audible across the entire city... If this is the future of diversity in SF TV, then count me out. Yes, half the cast are non-white and we have an even male/female balance, which is good. But surely we can do better than a parade of racial/ national stereotypes?

Michael Trimmer, email

Point taken, but the last time there was something like this we got guff Kiefer Sutherland series Touch, so at least we're moving in the right direction.

#### **DOWN ON DC**

Why are you guys so pessimistic about Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice? There is nothing wrong with dark superhero films - vou can't get any darker than the Nolan Bat trilogy and look how great they were! We have a good mix right now with Marvel films tending to be more on the fun side so there is something for everyone. I loved Man Of Steel and have high hopes for Batman V Superman.

Rory Raftery, Sussex

My concern is that DC doesn't have the first clue what they're doing with their cinematic universe, and shoehorning Wonder Woman, Aquaman, Cyborg et al into Dawn Of Justice is a big mistake. I'd like nothing more than to be proved wrong though.

#### **GIRL TROUBLE**

For most of my life I have been a huge Supergirl fan, so when I heard a TV series was being made I was over the moon. When the trailer for the series aired back in May I thought it was awesome. Melissa Benoist is absolutely perfect for the title role and I loved the rest of the cast. But after someone leaked the pilot online I was really annoyed and sad that this might ruin the hype and future of the series. I have heard that when TV shows and pilots get leaked it's a disaster. Also should I take some of the comments people have left on other sites about Supergirl seriously? I have to say some comments people have made are very hurtful. I hope with all my heart Supergirl will be the massive success we all want it to be.

Steven Wilson, email

Don't worry Steven, The Flash pilot leaked last year and that went on to be the most watched CW pilot Will meeting Batman ever, so I've little

make him dourer still?

## WAHE **WE ALSO**

Carlos Almonacid (sharing)

some alternative monster apocalypses with zombie-hater Alex in response to his Soapbox in issue 260); Simon Alden ("really shocked and saddened" by the death of Christopher Lee): Ohris Nicholls (amused by the twist at the end of end of issue six of Jason's Aaron's Star Wars comic but "still way too much tiny print"); Nizam B Mohamed Hariri (whose favourite Christopher Lee character was Saruman); Shane Jackson ("Rest In Peace Christopher Lee and Leonard Nimov"): • Keith Tudor (wondering why Universal has released a Jurassic Park DVD and Blu-ray set with a space for Jurassic World. The answer is money. Always money); • Martin Brown (fed up with the constant stream of superhero films and vearning for more original SF fare); • Rik Laan (who enjoyed Tomorrowland, particularly Raffey Cassidy's performance); Mike Garner ("Why did Ultron have a mouth?" This is keeping us up at night too!); • Russell Potter ("Lee was a wonderful and versatile actor. Many will remember him with affection from his Hammer films. He was in so many personal favourites"); Robert Graham ("Daredevil and The Flash: two complete opposites and turning into two of the best shows around at moment." I completely agree Robert); • Michael Antony Austin (calling for an SF streaming service, like Netflix for genre films and shows. We like your thinking); • Gary Watson ("First Leonard Nimoy, now Sir Christopher Lee; 2015's not going to be a good year, is it?"): A Hanna (calling for Donnie Yen to play Namor and Jackie Chan to play Ghost Rider - interesting choices!); Ilona Kosmowsky (disappointed Dark City didn't make our top 20 films list); John McClure Kimmins ("Proof that an octogenarian can kick ass in Star Wars and The Lord Of The

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS WITH THE SCI-FI WORLD!

Write in to SFX via social media and more traditional methods. Email us at sfx@futurenet.com or you can try Post Apocalypse, SFX, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA if you're not taken with technology.

Rings"); and many more!



## Wishlist

Illustrating what you want to see in new SF films and television.

This Month: Gareth Edwards puts the war back into Star Wars

### Star Wars: Rogue One

#### **YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS**

#### **A Connected Universe**

For starters you want *Rogue One* to truly feel part of a galaxy far, far away. "A reference to animated series *Rebels*," says **Robert William Graham**. "It should be all brand new characters but set up characters and events in the original trilogy."

#### The Dark Side

Given that Vader, the Emperor and Grand Moff Tarkin are at the top of their evil game before A New Hope it's little surprise you want some appearances from one (or all three). "Darth Vader should be in Rogue One, but not the main villain," says Gary Pratt.

#### War, Huh, Yeah

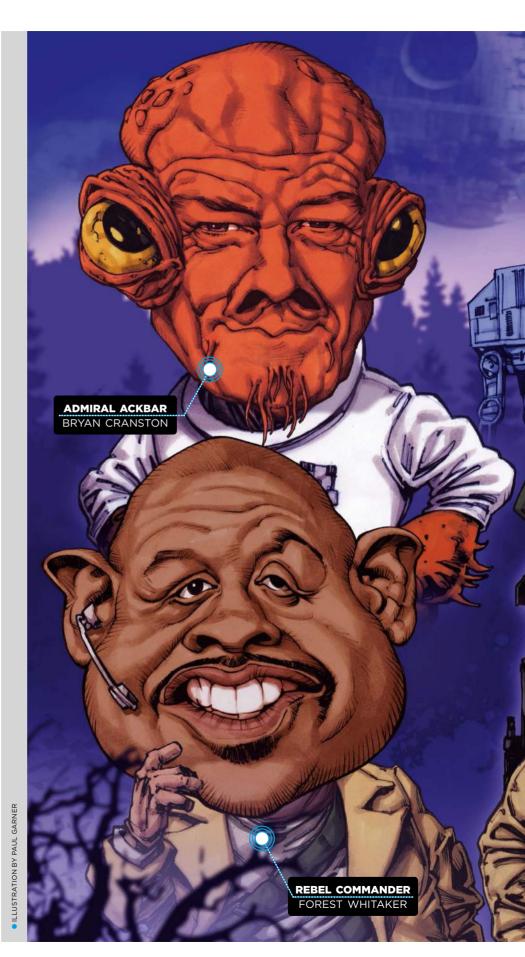
"Blood, sweat and mud. Saving Private Ryan on the forest moon of Endor, essentially," says Isaac Thompson, echoing many who called for a different feel from the main films in the series.

#### **New Heroes**

Setting the film during a time period yet to be covered on the big screen means opportunities to introduce fresh faces. "Don't make anyone the second cousin twice removed of Han Solo, there are an infinite number of stories in the Star Wars universe," says Peter Lowdon.

#### **New Sounds**

You can't have *Star Wars* without Ben Burtt's sound effects, or John Williams' score, but **Stephane Thevenin** wants a fresh spin on the familiar soundscape. "A variation on the rhythm and composition of Williams' music could be great."







## ARE YOU LISTENING?

As if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror...

- Porkins. **Myles Fitzpatrick**
- If it's set around the time of A New Hope, it's very important to remember women didn't wear bras then. [Equally important to remember men did - Ed]

#### Richard Dyke

When discussing heist plans, I'd like Admiral Ackbar to appear and say, "We could set a trap!"

#### That's it. *Laura Tisdall*I want "Rebel spaceships

- striking from a hidden base" winning their first victory against the evil Empire. **Daryl Smith**I want the whole film to be a
- I want the whole film to be a Battle of Britain style aerial dogfight. Exposition can cop a walk. **FlangeBadger**
- I'd love to see Darth Vader and the Emperor make an appearance. **Russell Garland**
- I'd like it if this is the first time the Rebels see an AT-AT - a looming beast appearing out of the trees in the way Edwards treated Godzilla. **Annie Morgan**
- Make Stormtroopers a force to be reckoned with. If it's going to have a war movie feel there needs to be tangible danger.

#### Carlie Sommer

- ▶ Ewoks all over the place. And finally confirm that they're cuddly little cannibals who eat the flesh of fallen Stormtroopers. We're all thinking it. **Sammi Hellen**
- Have Edwards's *Godzilla* castmember Bryan Cranston play Ackbar. *Clair York*
- So long as you can feel the dirt under the fingernails of the characters I'll be happy.

#### Geraint Raynard

I'd love for them to get a hint of Star Wars's more mystical elements in. Maybe one of the troops could be Force-sensitive?

#### Ashton Hill

- An adaptation of *Dark Forces*, complete with Kyle Katarn. *Bill Allen*
- Preveal that Jar Jar Binks has been a prisoner of war for the last 30 years, left to starve to death in some godforsaken hell hole of a prison and shrivelled like a deflated balloon. **Zak Russell**

#### coming soon

#### Doctor Strange and Big Trouble In Little China

Marvel's dark arts master hits our pages soon, and we want your thoughts on the *Big Trouble* redo.



Send in your ideas about our current Wishlist by visiting **bit.ly/SFXwishlist** 





with a remarkable recreation of Hill Valley c1955 for last year's open air Back To The Future screenings, Secret Cinema had a tough task ahead if they hoped to top their most elaborate production yet. With Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back they've been (mostly) successful.

We'll avoid a spoiler splurge as much as possible, because half the joy of Secret Cinema is that you don't know what's in store. It's important to note, however, that the more you put in, the more you'll get back. Every attendee is assigned a faction and a character. I was Kazdan Krell of the Creative Council. Others could be starfighters, mercenaries, governors or galactic explorers, each with their own loosely defined costumes. No one's going to turn you away if you rock up in civvies, but it goes against the spirit of the evening; even if, ultimately, your faction doesn't matter. Everyone is simply a member of RebelX - a rogue alliance located on Earth who soon make their escape to an iconic Star Wars locale...

The live-action element is essentially a trip through *A New Hope*, with two key locations

recreated in impressive detail. The first is full of market stalls (top tip: eat here!) and dusty buildings, and is populated by actors who never break character. Interacting with the cast is key to securing passage to the next area. We found this the most enjoyable aspect of the whole evening as you use your accumulated knowledge to gain allies, bust fellow travellers out of prison or bargain your way into the most notorious bar in the galaxy. You're left entirely to your own devices to work out what to do next, which might frustrate anyone seeking a more passive experience. Make sure you arrive early, because as there's so much to see and do it's very easy to miss things.

The second major area is less successful in terms of interaction, but has a show-stopping climax that left us grinning like loons (Must.

## You're left to your own devices to work out what to do next

Not. Spoil.) and leads straight into the screening. In comparison to everything that comes before it, however, the actual presentation of The Empire Strikes Back feels like an anti-climax. Whereas BTTF was full of incredible, crowd-pleasing live-action elements, The Empire Strikes Back's theatrical elements are thoroughly underwhelming, amounting to sparse appearances by costumed actors recreating odd bits of action here and there. The big problem is that instead of presenting the film on one screen for the assembled masses here there are four simultaneous showings, which left our audience oddly muted and sparse, ruining the atmosphere. On the upside: actual seats!

The real question is: does it justify the expense? At £78 each tickets aren't cheap, and that's before you've invested in (optional) costumes, faction scarves, props and pricey food and drink on site. But there's a good reason why tickets cost that much – the scale and showmanship is awe-inspiring and won't be forgotten in a hurry. For *Star Wars* fans it's a dream night out. Impressive. Most impressive. www.secretcinema.org



#### **Doctor Who Festival** 13-15 November 2015, ExCel London

#### Find out what makes the TARDIS tick at the new Who convention

FTER AN IMPRESSIVE
50th anniversary Celebration in
2013 the Beeb's official Time Lord
con is returning this November, with
Twelfth Doctor Peter Capaldi and head
writer Steven Moffat in attendance.

The weekend-long event has a slightly different focus this time round with activities designed to give fans a glimpse into how the world of *Doctor Who* is brought to the screen. There'll be cast and crew panels, costumes and props on show and you can even have your picture taken on an actual series nine set. Learn what it takes to appear on screen alongside the Doctor at drama

school sessions, experience what goes on behind the camera at a series of interactive workshops or swing by the shopping village where an extensive range of official *Who* merch and photo opportunities will be available.

Want to put your *Who* knowledge to the test? The Fan Challenge pits you against the biggest Whovians in the universe. Or show off your hand-made Romana costume at the Cosplay Showcase. If you've ever wanted to go under the skin of the Doctor there's no better place. "I can't believe we're going to give away our secrets!" Steven Moffat says. "This is the closest you could

possibly get to finding out what happens on set and how this magical show is put together." Can't argue with that.

Tickets are still on sale at the time of writing and cost £68 for adults or £32.25 for anyone 16 and under. A TARDIS ticket is available for £116 and gets you seats in the front block for panels, an official souvenir programme, a limited edition T-shirt and access to a lounge exclusive to TARDIS ticket holders. Can't attend the whole weekend? No problem – the Festival programme is the same each day, so it's possible to see everything in 24 hours.

http://bit.ly/WhoFestival

CON REPORT

#### **World Horror Convention**

7-10 May 2015, Atlanta Marriott Marguis Hotel

Anthony Taylor reports on the convention celebrating 25 scary years

Horror Writers Association gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, over the weekend of 8-10 May to celebrate the silver anniversary of the convention. World Horror Con was started in 1991 in Nashville, Tennessee, by members of the professional writers association to celebrate the year's best horror fiction via the Bram Stoker Awards.

This year's event featured several programming tracks aimed at improving members' writing, marketing and business skills, as well as readings, a film festival, art show and a mass signing which was open to the public. Guests of honour included writers Charlaine Harris, Jonathan Maberry, Christopher Golden, John Farris, Kami

Garcia, Lisa Tuttle, artist Bob Eggleton and Grand Master William F Nolan. co-creator of *Logan's Run*.

Attendees could partake in panels such as "LGBT Themes In Horror Fiction", "Dark Carnivàle: Freaks, Geeks, Magicians And Spiritualists" (which featured Daniel Knauf, creator of HBO's *Carnivàle*), "Southern Folklore In Horror Literature, Ins And Outs Of Options In Today's Film Market", and many others. Though a

professional conference more than fan convention, guests were encouraged to cosplay and revel at the Silver Scream Spook Show Creepy Costume Ball on Friday night.

The Stoker Awards banquet was held on Saturday 9 May, and awards were presented for Superior Achievements in a novel to *Blood Kin* by Steve Rasnic Tem, graphic novel to *Bad Blood* by Jonathan Maberry, screenplay for *The Babadook* by Jennifer Kent, and others. In addition, Lifetime Achievement Awards were presented to Tanith Lee (just a few weeks before her death) and Jack Ketchum, and the

Grand Master Award to William F Nolan.
The Horror Writers Association will reconvene
at World Horror Con 26 in Provo, Utah from 28
April to 1 May 2016. www.whc2015.org

#### **UPCOMING**

Dates meet diary, diary meet dates...

#### Can't Stop The Serenity

22 August

A decade after its world premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival, Serenity returns to the Fountain Park Cineworld in aid of Equality Now & Marie Curie Hospices. http://bit.ly/
SerenityTickets

#### **Asylum VII** 28-31 August

The largest and longest running steampunk festival in the world is back for another, four-day long, retro-futurist extravaganza. http://steampunk.svnthasite.com/

#### Sci-fi Wales

5 September

Expect celebrity guests, talks, traders, prop displays, cosplay, competitions, photo opportunities and much more at the Llandudno con.

#### BristolCon 26 September

Jasper Fforde, Jaine
Fenn and Chris Moore
are the esteemed
guests of honour at
this year's West
Country sci-fi and
fantasy convention.

www.bristolcon.org

#### **Fanderson**

2-4 October

The official Gerry
Anderson appreciation
society returns with
its first weekend
festival in five
years to
celebrate the
50th anniversary
of Thunderbirds.
http://bit.ly/
FandersonCon





Body hopping has been going on in sci-fi for yonks. But how closely have you been paying attention? Test yourself!

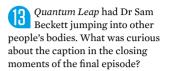


Russell Lewin, **Production Editor** 



- Which body-swap tale about a certain day of the week has Disney made three versions of?
- In 1988's 18 Again!, which elderly actor swaps bodies with 18-year-old Charlie Schlatter?
- With which 1988 Tom Hanks movie did Penny Marshall become the first female director to direct a film that grossed more than \$100 million?
- Lily Tomlin's spirit ends up in which comic actor's body in 1984's All Of Me?
- Who was The Hot Chick in 2002?
- True or false: Elton John produced 2006's It's A Boy Girl Thing.

- Star Trek episode "Turnabout Intruder", in which Kirk becomes trapped in the body of an insane woman, is significant for what reason?
- Which legend of silent comedy directed one of the very first body-swap films, Turnabout, in 1940?
- Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger were originally considered for which 1997 John Woo film?
- Get a point for naming either one of the body swappers in 1987's Like Father Like Son.
- Sharon Gless, of Cagney & Lacey fame, starred as a woman in her husband's body in which obscure 1979 TV show?



Fill in the missing word on the following films: Every \*\*\* Has His Date (2001), \*\*\* matic (1999), The Shaggy \*\*\* (2006) and **Oh Heavenly** \*\*\* (1980).



In which film did this couple swap bodies?

Ryan Reynolds starred in appalling body-swap comedy The Change-Up. Who was the actor married to until 2011?

Red Dwarf episode "Bodyswap" is notable for being the first of the series to be what?

The Prisoner episode "Do Not Forsake Me Oh My Darling" largely has actor Nigel Stock as Number Six. rather than Patrick McGoohan. Why?

Name the movie where Eddie Murphy and Antonio Banderas's characters swap bodies.

Guy Pearce starred in 1996 Guy Pearce Station body swap comedy Dating The Enemy. But what country was the actor born in?

and Puss in Boots respectively 20 England Sam Beckett's name 14 Dog 15 Scooby-Doo (2003), where they played Fred and Daphine 16 Scalett Johansson 17 Recorded without a live studio audience 18 McGoohan was away filmiming (ce Station Sebra 19 Sivek The Third, where they voice Donkey Les Station Sebra 19 Sivek The Third, where they voice Donkey Freaky Freaky Friday (in 1995, 1995 and 2003) 2 George Burnd A Stown 4 Stown 4

soa voe ala wok Whose brain have you borrowed?













## The World Of SFX

Don't stop here: there's always more for you to read...



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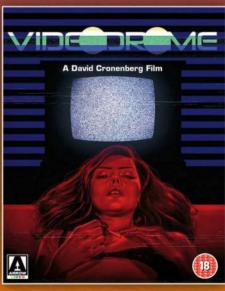








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THE NEW SERIES

## WHAT WE KNOW...

The new *X-Files* series is filming right now - it's due to wrap at the end of August - and will consist of six episodes that will air in January 2016. There would have been more episodes but David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson have other filming commitments.

At first, Anderson wasn't all that keen on the idea of doing the show again. It took persuasion from Duchovny, who'd just finished an epic run of sex, drugs and debauchery in Californication, and show creator Chris Carter, to get her on board. Once there, however, she enthusiastically told Entertainment Weekly: "It feels like we never stopped doing this."

This is not a reboot. It's actually being called "season ten", so it's a continuation of the series - although we're not sure if it will address the fact that Agents Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Reves (Annabeth Gish) were such a huge part of those final few seasons. There's a lot to cram into these half dozen episodes, obviously, but some kind of name-drop or cameo would be nice, eh?

Keeping in the spirit of the original X-Files, which filmed there until it moved to Los Angeles in its sixth season, the episodes are being shot in good old Vancouver, British Columbia. Those spooky, mossy, rain-drenched forests will feel like friends of yore...

Carter has revealed that the show will reflect the post-9/11 world of surveillance, human rights issues and government conspiracies. While he was always inspired by the Watergate scandal of the '70s - even going so far as to call

Mulder's first government informant Deep Throat, after the real-life whistleblower who brought down Nixon - the issues he used to write about, that lurked on the fringes of our existence, have now become a huge part of our lives. Well, aliens aside, naturally.

After they were shown kissing in 2008's big-screen outing The X-Files: I Want To Believe, the question on everybody's lips is: what's the deal with Mulder and Scully's relationship? The actors have remained silent on the subject, but mention that the two aren't living with each other and Mulder is apparently "in a dark. dark place". A publicity image of Mulder's pad seems to suggest that he's holed up in his house obsessing over UFOs and conspiracies to an unhealthy extent - perhaps he took a break-up badly? Perhaps Scully couldn't handle his latest quest? Does he have - gasp! - a new woman? Or does Scully have a new man?

We're also not sure whether Mulder and Scully actually work for the FBI in the new series. Although given the fact that their old boss, Mitch Pileggi's Walter Skinner, is popping up, perhaps the FBI will play a big part.

Another familiar face is also making a return... despite the fact anybody who's watched the show's series finale will know that it's bleedin' impossible. William B Davis is back as the Cigarette-Smoking Man - a magical resurrection, given

that we saw him atomised in a missile attack. Perhaps he'll be back as some kind of ghost? It wouldn't be the first time the series has brought back dead characters, whether in dream sequences or in flashbacks.

Rather oddly, Anderson's hair has been a huge talking point since filming began. When The X-Files ended it was a shock to see the actress dye her hair blonde; now it's a shock to see it red again (although not quite as red as the old days, mind). She has a secret, however: it's a wig. After being advised by her hairdresser not to dye it any more in case it falls out, the disappointed Anderson regretfully conceded the point and will wear a (thankfully very convincing) wig. "It's like wearing a vise on your head," she says. "Every day I have a whopping headache. I want the fans to know I'm suffering for the red!"

> Mulder's "I Want To Believe" poster is back, but in a slightly different

it's a montage made up of images sent in by fans to raise money for charity. Also present in his apartment: his old porn VHS tapes. Some things never change. ↔



## REUNIEL



#### THE X-FILES

#### THE EPISODES

## WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THEM

#### **EPISODE 1: "MY STRUGGLE"**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: CHRIS CARTER

Community star Joel McHale guest stars in this opening story. He's a talk show host named Ted O'Malley who sends Mulder and Scully off to interview an alien abduction victim, Sveta, played by Annet Mahendru – she's been subjected to all sorts of probes and prods, which brings back dodgy memories for Scully. All of which means we're on familiar ground here – the show is launching again with a "mythology" episode. Hopefully that won't scare off younger generations who weren't around when the first series aired...

Meanwhile, Anderson says of this episode: "It's setting groundwork, so it's got a particular role to play. It does exactly what it needs to do."

#### **EPISODE 2: "HOME AGAIN"**

WRITTEN BY: GLEN MORGAN, JAMES WONG

Two of the show's leading lights return with an episode that, contrary to initial speculation, isn't actually a reference to the infamously censor-bothering season four episode, "Home". We suspect - and hope - that the "home" in question here is the FBI building. Possibly a little basement at the bottom of it. Cross your fingers.



## EPISODE 3: "MULDER AND SCULLY MEET THE WERE-MONSTER"

#### WRITTEN BY: DARIN MORGAN

The writer responsible for some of the show's most enduringly quirky episodes ("Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose", "Jose Chung's From Outer Space") returns with a story that sounds as though it's going to raise a few smiles. But what kind of were-monster is it? The show's already done werewolves (season one's "Shapes"), so could it be a were-bear? A were-cat? A were-sloth? A were-sloth? A were-sloth would be amazing. If a bit languid.

#### $\frac{\text{EPISODES}}{\text{All we know about these as we write this is that}}$

All we know about these as we write this is that Carter has penned two them, one being the finale. Episode four apparently features Scully's faith, which sounds like Carter territory. Other than this... we can only wait and see!



#### 5 THINGS WE WANT TO SEE...

The X-Files was one of the first TV shows to regularly use mobile phones. A homage to this might be nice - perhaps a shot of a brick-sized phone gathering dust in a drawer...

Mulder and Scully running around in dark forests/tunnels/basements with flashlights to the fore. Come on, it's traditional!

Sunflower seeds - Mulder's favourite snack may or may not return; Duchovny dodged the question when it was asked. Watch this space, snack fans.

A familiar quote flashing up at the start of each episode, à la "The Truth Is Out There".

The Lone Gunmen. Some say they died. Some say they faked it. We want them back and we don't care how. Are they besties with Edward Snowden? And will Frohike still have a crush on Scully?



#### 5 THINGS WE DON'T WANT TO SEE...

Reams of exposition so intricate, convoluted and contrived that no human could ever say it out loud without tying their tongue in a knot. Pity the actors.

A few nods to the long-time fans will be welcome, but the tone of the show shouldn't be too self-reverential. Newbies will be lost.

ADAM CANSWELL

SPLASH NEWS (1). DUCHOVNY INTERVIEW:

Unresolved plot strands - the old series had a bit of an issue with this. Although who knows, perhaps those queries, such as whatever happened to the alien colonisation of Earth set for December 2012, will be answered here?

The complete absence of Scully's son, William. He doesn't have to actually appear; maybe she could have a sneaky picture on her desk, or a photo on her fridge?

Any mention of *The X-Files: I Want To Believe*. We're trying to pretend it never happened.

## THE TRUTH IS HERE!

After two days on set of *The X-Files* reboot, DAVID DUCHOVNY chats to *SFX* to preview the series revival...

#### What's it like to work with Gillian Anderson again on *The X-Files* reboot?

• It feels very familiar. We worked together for so long, but that was a long time ago. Then we worked together again about seven or eight years ago, but I just feel like there's a connection between us now. The fact that we did the show at that time in our lives for so long means that we are always going to have an acting connection to fall back on.

#### How would you describe your first day on set?

• Again, it felt very familiar. I thought, "Let's do it; let's do these characters." Unfortunately, I had about five pages of expositional dialogue and that was interesting because I hadn't been asked to say that kind of crap in a long time. There were things like "electrogravitic propulsion". You say that!

#### So you're finding the scripts tougher this time around?

• That's just a tidbit, but there were five pages of it. It was great that that was the first day because it was like, "Okay, this is how the guy speaks. This is the world we are in. Let's get in shape for it"

#### What's different about the rebooted show?

• I think what's happened is that Gillian and I have changed. I am a better actor and Gillian is a better actor, and we get to bring those changes and abilities to the roles as they are written and as they were established. That's interesting to me. *The X-Files* is not going to be the same. It can't be the same and we are not the same. We are not the same performers.

#### What are the biggest differences between the old show and the new show?

I don't know. I have only worked two days.

#### But you've read the scripts...

I have read two scripts out of six. It's an



instinctual feeling that I have that the process is now different. Just in the two days that we worked, I feel like the process feels more creative this time.

#### How long is the shoot?

• It's six episodes and each takes eight days, so we are going to wrap around 20 August.

#### **How is Chris Carter?**

He's good.

#### Did he write all six episodes?

• No, he didn't write them all. Glen Morgan wrote the second one, Darin Morgan wrote one and Vince [Gilligan] is busy. He's probably too expensive!





## The theory of ANTHURS

Simon Pegg's playing God in a new Python-powered SF comedy. Stephen Kelly keeps the faith on set



HE BOARD OUTSIDE the North London building says Ashmount Primary School, although it hasn't been that since 2012. Inside is a derelict mess of leaking roofs, filthy carpets, loitering zombies, tatty old furniture and a classroom that has been blasted to bits by aliens. Some of this is due to the building having been abandoned since the school moved to another site. The rest is down to the fact that today it's been repurposed by Monty Python's Terry Jones. We'll leave it to you to guess which is which.

Welcome to the set of Jones' Absolutely Anything, a comedy whose hero Neil Clarke, a disillusioned teacher played by Simon Pegg, suddenly finds that he has the power to do, well, absolutely anything. It's an ability bestowed upon him by four aliens watching from space, all voiced by surviving Pythons John Cleese, Michael Palin, Terry Gilliam and Eric Idle. It does not, surprisingly, go well, and Clarke begins to realise that not only must he be careful what he wishes for - but how he wishes it.

"The powers are quite strange and pedantic," explains Jones, who speaks to SFX in the film's final week of production, "and he doesn't know he's got them in the beginning. He doesn't realise until another teacher asks, 'What would you do if you could do anything?' and Neil says, 'I'd make an alien spaceship hit class 4C and vaporise them [hence the blasted classroom...]"

"And then," chips in producer Ben Timlett, "he tries to fix it by saying, 'Everyone come back alive!' [...and the zombies]. We're shooting that scene today, with people coming out the graveyard. We're then going to shoot a street scene where dead people are trying to get back into their houses."

That's a bit grim, isn't it?

"Well," he grins, "I think certain teachers would enjoy their class's demise. He does redeem it. There is a happy ending!"

long gestation

Absolutely Anything has effectively been in the making for 20 years. Jones originally started on the script with Gavin Scott, known for his work on Small Soldiers and The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles. It was, according to Jones, inspired by HG Wells' 1889 short story The Man Who Could Work Miracles, which

also centred around someone whose sudden omnipotent power gets him into trouble, but soon "changed dramatically". It wasn't to be, however. After years of getting it into shape, the script was scrapped in 2003 when Bruce Almighty - where Jim Carrey's character is given the power of God - was released. "It was just too similar a premise," says Jones.

But Absolutely Anything wasn't dead - it was resting. In 2011, after being asked by Phoenix Pictures CEO Mike Medavoy if he had anything in his "bottom drawer", Jones and Scott dusted off the script and had another go. Producer Timlett, who raised money for the film along with Jones' son Bill, reckons the time away from the project was vital.

"I actually remember reading this script a long time ago and not thinking much of it at the time! But when Terry and Gavin got the call they started to work it into something really, really good. It's a vast difference to what it was, and I think that's what sometimes happens with scripts - sometimes you need to take a fresh look at it. They'd made a lot of changes. It just became wonderful and suddenly it was a laugh-out loud script."

The decision to return to film is quite a •>





big deal for 74-year-old Jones. A member of legendary comedy troupe Monty Python, he co-directed 1975's ...Holy Grail with Terry Gilliam and then helmed ...Life Of Brian and ...Meaning Of Life by himself. From there, he established his directorial style with such films as Personal Services and Erik The Viking, but became disillusioned with the film industry when his 1996 film The Wind In The Willows was "appallingly handled" in terms of distribution. Now, though, he feels that it's time to get back in the director's chair. "I'm very excited."

公

It's been a year of grand returns for Jones, who, last July, reunited on stage with the remaining Pythons (Graham Chapman died in 1989) for a string of live shows at the O2 in London. In *Absolutely Anything*, they will reunite again – albeit, only in voice. They play squabbling CGI aliens who, after intercepting Nasa's Voyager probe, become curious with Earth and decide to test the human race by seeing if one of them would use God-like powers for good or evil.

We use "reunite" loosely, mind, as actually getting them all together in one recording studio is, says Timlett, "virtually impossible.

I think when that happens a black hole opens in Australia or something. So, we did
Terry Gilliam and Mike Palin

"IT'S VERY EASY
TO BE FLIPPANT
ABOUT SCI-FI
OR HORROR
OR ANYTHING
GENRE"

together, and then John [Cleese] came in on his own and then we had Eric [Idle] soon after."

Did the guys take much persuasion to do the film?

"I twisted their arms a bit," Jones chuckles, "but they all came along, and were agreeable."

"They're all about money," Timlett adds, tongue moving firmly to cheek. "Money, money, money, divorce this, divorce that."

#### Simon signs up

Humanity's representative, of course, is bumbling everyman teacher Neil – a natural fit for *Spaced* and *Shaun Of The Dead* actor Simon Pegg, who is currently hiding from the rain with co-star Sanjeev Bhaskar, who plays colleague Ray. Even so, he initially turned down the role.

"I spoke to Terry about it a few years ago," Pegg says. "I was developing something with Nick Frost at the time which didn't have a

similar story, but was about a guy who had a special ability, and it felt like a bit too much of a crossover. So I said, 'I don't think I can do this.' But,

'I don't think I can do this.' But, obviously, the thing with Nick drifted away in the end and here I am! It's a bit of a dream come true, because the Pythons were such an important part of my formative years as a fan of comedy. To be able





to work with [Jones] is another box ticked off the list for me."

Alongside Pegg, as befits the Pythons, is a cast packed with British comedy stars, including Eddie Izzard, Joanna Lumley and Meera Syal, as well as Kate Beckinsale as love interest Catherine. The film's most notable star, however, will be the late comic titan Robin Williams, whose last role before his sad death last year was the voice of Neil's talking dog Dennis. According to Jones, who directed Williams over Skype, the man was a "perfectionist" who did three recording sessions before laying down anything he deemed worthy, having decided on the third attempt that Dennis should be delivered in the style of a 16-year-old boy.

Dennis himself, however, is a real dog called Mojo, who, despite being incredibly well-trained, has proven a challenge for both Jones ("Oh, it's painful!") and his on-screen owner.

"It was difficult at first," says Pegg, "because it was just me and Mojo filming in Neil's flat. As soon as Sanjeev and Kate got on set, I suddenly remembered there were humans in the world and it became a bit more fun. At the time it was frustrating. It was because of the sheer industry involved in working with a dog. So if you do a take which is amazing, Oscar-winning, and Mojo does something he's not supposed to do, then the shot is unusable. Whereas if Mojo does a take, and you're

mediocre, that's the one that gets used.

"He is so well trained, though," Pegg continues. "When I see my dogs in the morning and I'm all, 'Hey how's it going?' they're so happy to see me. But Mojo is so focused. No one's allowed to talk to him or stroke him. And it's not because he's a diva, they just have to keep him so focused. He's a total professional."

Bhaskar pipes up from the other side of the classroom. "He was telling me the other day that he loved your early stuff."

Pegg laughs. "He thinks I've sold out."
"Yeah," Bhaskar smiles, "he wants you to
make another series of *Spaced.*"

#### Balancing act

Of course, the big question when it comes to Absolutely Anything isn't to do with Pythons or dogs, but whether it's actually funny. Blending science fiction and comedy is a tricky art, one that has yielded classics such as Ghostbusters and Back To The Future, but also spewed out disasters like Eddie Murphy's The Adventures Of Pluto Nash. Pegg, obviously, cannot guarantee that you'll be rolling in the aisles but, seeing as he's previously starred in films like Paul and The World's End, he is a man who knows a thing or two about sci-fi laughs.

"I think the art of doing that is to never assume that the science fiction element is funny," he says. "Sci-fi has been, and always



## Class Oct Kumars star Sanjeev Bhaskar is biology teacher Ray

#### If you were Neil and could do absolutely anything, what would you do?

√x I could fly? But then you'd probably get wet and get a cold. Maybe invisible? But then if I drive my car that's going to look weird as it'll just be a driverless car. It would be impractical. So I think time travel. I'd go back in time and tell Shakespeare he's going to be big.

#### What's in store for Ray in Absolutely Anything?

☼ He's Neil's only friend and the only one who knows about the powers. Neil, in an act of generosity, realises that I have a crush on a fellow teacher and uses his power to not just make her fall in love with me, but make her worship me, which she does literally and starts building shrines around the school...

#### You're a sci-fi fan. How do you find mixing sci-fi with comedy?

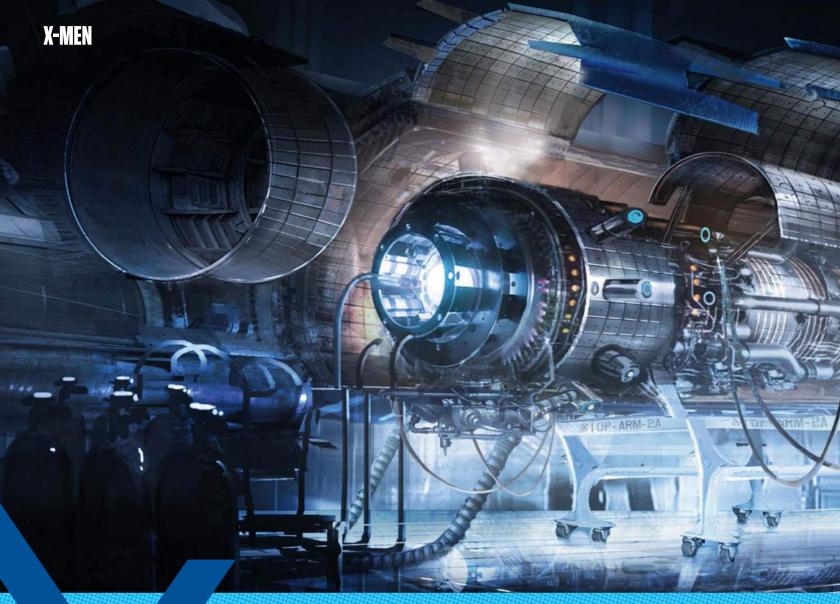
↑ I think that there have always been pockets of humour in sci-fi anyway. The original *Star Trek* series' "The Trouble With Tribbles", for example, is brilliant, and there was always humour in the interplay between Spock and Kirk. I think the wrong thing to do is to see sci-fi and comedy as separate – comedy should always be embedded to various degrees in whatever genre you do. **Stephen Kelly** 

will be, a fantastic metaphorical tool. In Shaun and certainly with The World's End, we were using sci-fi as a metaphorical tool and not taking the mick out of it. It's very easy to be flippant about sci-fi or horror or anything genre, because it's easy to reduce it to something. You can say, 'Oh yeah, sci-fi's all about this' and 'Horror's all about that.' It's very easy to be dismissive about it. What's harder is to actually embrace it and use it constructively and seriously and approach it from the point of view of affection rather than disdain. I think always: if you're going to make a sci-fi comedy or a horror comedy, it's always better to make sure that part is intact, and not just a piss-take, like Spaceballs!" SFX

Absolutely Anything opens in cinemas on Friday 14 August.



☆



# THE FRANKINE JUNIVERS IJNIVERS I

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Over on the Twentieth Century Fox lot, yet another cinematic universe is taking shape. And this one's formed from the raw matter that ignited the entire superhero boom in the first place. Fifteen years on from Bryan Singer's game-changing *X-Men*, Fox's ownership of Marvel's *X*-brand arms it with the potential screen-power to match any of its rivals.

Yes, mankind, Homo Superior is on the rise. The freak gene is multiplying. The mutants walk among us in ever greater numbers. And the next phase of our evolution begins with *X-Men: Apocalypse*, due for release in May 2016.

It's a suitably epic, epochal title for what's shaping up to be a pivotal film in the franchise. *Apocalypse* will cap the decades-spanning trilogy that began with 2011's *X-Men: First Class*, completing the stories of the younger Mystique, Beast, Charles Xavier and Magneto, the four characters at the heart of the reborn X-saga.

But it promises to be as much a beginning as a conclusion. Trilogy stars Jennifer Lawrence and Michael Fassbender may be at the end of their contracts but we're about to encounter a whole new generation of mutants, as familiar as they are fresh *X-Men: Apocalypse* will introduce us to younger versions of classic heroes Storm, Cyclops and Jean Grey, the icons who originally launched the franchise in 2000.

But Fox's plans are infinitely more ambitious than simply establishing a new status quo to carry the core films forward. Beyond *Apocalypse* we're promised a third solo adventure for Hugh Jackman's ferociously popular Wolverine. Fellow mutant icons Deadpool and Gambit are also set to earn their own spin-offs. A big-screen version of '80s comic book fave *The New Mutants* is in active development. We're promised an *X-Force* film too. And then there are rumblings of an X-flavoured TV show...

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September 2015 SFX 55

## X-MEN: APOCALYPSE THE ESSENTIALS

Back to the future! *X-Men: First Class* was set against the jittery but stylish backdrop of the early '60s Cold War. *Days Of Future Past* moved the mutants to the hairy, funky '70s. *Apocalypse* updates the action to the '80s – specifically 1983, the era of Ronald Reagan, Men Without Hats and Mutually Assured Destruction (we know the title refers to the movie's villain but does it also hint at the very contemporary threat of nuclear apocalypse too?).

There's said to be a touch of Spandau Ballet about James McAvoy's wardrobe choices in this one – we're thinking Soul Boy suit rather than New Romantic kilt 'n' blouse combo – while the new Nightcrawler is rocking a jacket straight from *Thriller* era Michael Jackson. Oh, and look for *Return Of The Jedi* playing at the movies...

Michael Fassbender returns as master of magnetism Erik Lehnsherr.

Apocalypse may signal the end of his current deal with Fox but he's up for more metal-warping action beyond the trilogy's conclusion. "I will shoot a hundred of them," he tells Variety. "The contract is in three-film deals, and this is the last of that. But I'll be curious to see what happens next."



After two remarkably hirsute adventures the young Professor X will finally resemble the classic cueball of the comic books. James McAvoy has scraped a safety razor across his skull for Apocalypse, edging him ever closer to Patrick Stewart's streamlined incarnation...







But it's goodbye to Jennifer
Lawrence as morally ambiguous
shape-shifter Mystique. "It's my
last one," she confirms, doubtlessly relishing
the prospect of life beyond blue paint and
prosthetic glue. Apocalypse is rumoured to
crank up the romance between Mystique
and Magneto, capitalising on the A-list
chemistry of Lawrence and Fassbender –
little wonder, given how both stars have
risen in the Hollywood firmament since
2011's First Class.

There's also talk of a hot mutant love triangle between Mystique, Magneto and Beast (that's love triangle, we stress, not a preposterously kinky superpowered threesome). Nicholas Hoult is back as the blue-furred boffin.

Jennifer Lawrence is back in blue for one last X-outing.

Evan Peters' cocky speedster Quicksilver officially stole Days Of Future Past and he encores in Apocalypse, this time with a meatier role – and an expanded power set. "Hopefully we can do some more unique things with his powers," producer Simon Kinberg tells IGN, "and go a little deeper with the character too."

Lucas Till returns as Havok, now confirmed to be Scott (Cyclops) Summers' brother Alex. We'll also meet the parents of the Summers siblings.

Tye Sheridan will be unleashing the optic blasts as the new Cyclops, inheriting the ruby quartz lenses from James Marsden. Sheridan made his big-screen debut in Terrence Malick's *The Tree Of Life* and starred alongside fellow X-Man Nicholas Hoult in *Dark Places*. We're promised a slightly edgier take on Scott, potentially less wholesome than

So preposterously powerful that his name has claimed the title of the movie itself, Apocalypse may be the deadliest foe the X-Men have ever confronted. We first glimpsed him at the close of *Days Of Future Past*, an enigmatic figure worshipped by Egyptians in Old Testament times. "En Sabah Nur!" they chanted - the First One!

But who is this millennia-old antagonist – and why is he the ultimate X-villain? The creation of Louise Simonson and Jackson Guice, Apocalypse entered the comic books in the pages of X-Factor in 1986. Born 5,000 years ago in the Jordanian city of Aquaba he's the original mutant, the first human to possess the X-gene. He used alien tech abandoned by the godlike Celestials to enhance his powers and recruit acolytes, rising

to become a charismatic cult leader and self-appointed mutant supremacist, determined to bring Homo sapiens to their knees.

Apocalypse's abilities include Xavier-level telekinesis, superstrength, flight, energy blasts and the power to rearrange every molecule in his body.

The immortal mutant will be brought to the screen by Oscar Isaac, soon to be seen as crack X-wing pilot Poe Dameron in Star Wars: The Force Awakens. He's described his take on the character as "the embodiment of the second coming of the judgements of God."

Set the threat level to Biblical...



SINGER ON-SET



the dependable team leader we met in the noughties movies.

Your new Jean Grey is Sophie Turner, alias *Game Of Thrones*' Sansa Stark. And yes, that's possibly the long shadow of Phoenix we glimpse in the franchise's future... "Maybe one of the reasons



that they chose me for [Jean] is because they saw the dark side of Sansa," Turner tells *IGN*. "Maybe they're thinking 'Oh, Phoenix, Jean Grey.' I definitely see a lot of parallels in there... [Jean] struggles with her power, and not being accepted in the human world." The filmmakers say we'll see a more complex, less assured Jean, one still dealing with the reality of her phenomenal telekinetic abilities. She'll also have archery skills. Shades of *The Hunger Games*?

There's a new Angel, too. Britain's Ben Hardy will play Warren Worthington III. If the movie adheres to the classic comic book canon then Angel will serve Apocalypse as one of the Four Horsemen, the ancient mutant's personal guard. In the comics Apocalypse transforms Angel into Archangel, replacing his feathered wings with armoured ones. Teased concept art from the movie clearly shows the character with a set of metallic wings. We're already imagining a spectacular fight scene with Magneto...



## THEXBIG THING,

#### BEYOND APOCALYPSE. BEHOLD THE FUTURE OF THE X-MEN UNIVERSE ON THE SCREEN...

#### DEADPOOL

**Director:** Tim Miller

Stars: Ryan Reynolds, Morena Baccarin

ETA: 5 February 2016

X-FACTORS: Okay, so technically he's not a mutant but this smart-mouthed mercenary is a longstanding player in the X-Men universe, earning his accelerated healing power from the same Weapon X program that enhanced Wolverine. Look for appearances by genuine mutants Angel Dust and Copycat along with Andre Tricoteux as steel-skinned X-Man Colossus. We're promised a faithfully flip, self-aware take on Marvel's fourth wall-breaking icon, mixing adrenalinised action and postmodern hilarity.

#### THE WOLVERINE 3

**Director: James Mangold** Stars: Hugh Jackman ETA: 2 March 2017

X-FACTORS: Hugh Jackman vows that he will unsheath Wolvie's claws one final time - never say never again, Hugh... - so there's already a ton of fan expectation riding on ol' mutton-chops' third solo flick, not least the pressure to adapt classic comic book tale Old Man Logan, Jackman will only reveal that the screenplay takes elements from multiple Marvel issues. Patrick Stewart, meanwhile, hints that the movie may team Wolvie with Professor X...

#### GAMBIT

**Director: Rupert Wyatt** Stars: Channing Tatum ETA: 7 October 2016

X-FACTORS: The X-universe gets an injection of rascally, Southern-fried charm when fan favourite Gambit arrives in the form of Alabama-born screen hunk Channing Tatum. Armed with the mutant power to wield the kinetic energy of objects - turning his trademark pack of playing cards



into 52 decidedly lethal objects - the "ragin' Caiun" walks a twinklingly fine line between scoundrel and superhero. If the film capitalises on that Wolverine-style rogue appeal it's a winner.

#### THE NEW MUTANTS

**Director:** Josh Boone Stars: Unknown ETA: Unknown

X-FACTORS: While Fox's other films are set to spotlight solo acts in the X-pantheon, this entry will introduce a parallel team to the main troupe. It takes its cue from the '80s Marvel title that resurrected the original premise of the X-Men, showcasing teen mutants in training at Charles Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters. Given that the core franchise films are introducing an equally green set of heroes it's hard to imagine this feeling as distinct as

it might.

X-FACTORS: Originally announced as a go-project in July 2013, this one seems to have slipped out of Cerebro's scanning range of late. Based on the definitive X-title of the steroidal, ultra-violent '90s comics era, it's another team-oriented spin-off, rumoured to unite Cable, Psylocke, Colossus, Domino and Deadpool - though whether the merc-with-the-mouth's solo movie impacts on this plan remains to be seen. Comic creator Rob Liefeld has championed Tom Hardy for timehopping antihero Cable.

#### THE TV SERIES

Producers: Evan Katz, Manny Coto Stars: Unknown ETA: Unknown

X-FACTORS: Marvel has already started to colonise the small screen and now Fox is looking for a piece of TV action too. All that's known about this one is that deposed Star Trek 3 screenwriters Patrick McKay and JD Payne are handling the writing while 24 veterans Evan Katz and Manny Coto will produce. Will the show transfer an established movie character? Or focus on an untapped team like Alpha Flight? We'd need an Xavier-style mind-probe to know...





Lana Condor is Jubilee, the teenage X-Man who first earned fan fave status in the '90s animated series. She has the power to project "energy plasmoids" from her fingertips. Olivia Munn plays purple-haired telepath Psylocke – twin sister of Captain Britain in the comics – who can shoot psi-bolts and conjure a psychic katana blade.

Alexandra Shipp will command the elements as the new Storm. Concept art shows the meteorologically-inclined mutant apparently locked in combat with Cyclops and Jean Grey, hinting that she may also be in the service of Apocalypse... Of course what we really want to know is whether she'll rock Storm's legendary '80s mohawk.

Rose Byrne returns as CIA operative Moira MacTaggert, last seen in *First Class*. Moira's reunion with the X-Men is complicated by the fact that her memories of their first encounter were erased by Charles Xavier. Awkward.

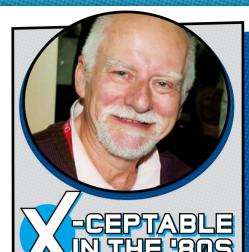
Expect Apocalypse to delve into distinctly subterranean strata of X-mythology.
Bryan Singer reveals that the movie will see the cinematic debut of Caliban, the sewer-

dwelling albino mutant introduced in the comics in 1981. The creation of key comic book creative team Chris Claremont (right) and Dave Cockrum, Caliban has the power to hunt down fellow mutants and leads an underground faction known as the Morlocks. We'll see his lair below Manhattan in the movie.

X-Men: Apocalypse will have repercussions for every movie that follows. "The aftermath of Apocalypse is something that will impact the course of history in the world," producer Simon Kinberg tells IGN, "much the same way the end of Days Of Future Past did. I would say that certainly the films will all be informed by one another."

Here's the crucial question: will Hugh Jackman complete his scorecard of appearing in every single X-Men movie? The official line is no – or at least no comment – but given the cheer that met his potty-mouthed, scenestealing cameo in X-Men: First Class we'd be amazed if the Adamantium Elvis didn't show his claws in this one...





THE X-MEN'S GREATEST WRITER CHRIS CLAREMONT ON THE MERRY MUTANTS' DEFINITIVE DECADE...

Could the X-Men stories you wrote in the '80s have been made in a different decade? The creation of characters grew organically out of the evolution of the X-Men as an ongoing story. People are always asking what is my favourite X-Men story, and my answer is always issues 94 to 279 inclusive. To me it's all one story in the same sense that a life is one life.

What do you feel distinguished the X-Men in the '80s?

The seminal difference between the *X-Men* then and the *X-Men* now was freedom. The editorial ethos of Marvel was different in the '70s and early middle '80s than it is today. You were expected to do superb stories on time and not be a pain in the ass. It was a much more freewheeling environment.

Few images of the X-Men in that decade are as iconic as Storm's mohawk. It looks like it'll feature in X-Men: Apocalypse... It will [laughs]? The irony was that [artist] Paul Smith did a selection of looks. We wanted something to shake everybody up about Ororo, and he drew that one as a giggle. I showed it to [editor] Louise [Simonson] and she said, "Oh this is cool." For me the beginning of it was in the wedding scene — Storm shows up in leathers with the mohawk and Kitty bursts into tears.

What did you think of X-Men: Days Of Future Past?

The only thing I regret about *Days Of Future Past* is that it would have been nice to see John Byrne and I get a credit, since it was our story. I assume it has everything to do with contracts and talks and what have you. *Days Of Future Past* was, of all the nine *X-Men* films to date, the closest to a straight adaptation of the original work. Being in the film [in a cameo role] was a hoot.

Joseph McCabe



## Michael B Jordan

Flame on! The new Human Torch prepares to burn up the screen

• WORDS BY NICK SETCHFIELD • PORTRAIT BY JOHN RUSSO

here's as much heat attached to Michael B Jordan as one of Johnny Storm's trademark fireballs. One of the rising stars of the American screen, he teamed with director Josh Trank on 2012's Chronicle, a provocative riff on the superhero myth. Trank was impressed: Jordan was the first person he cast in Fantastic Four, his suitably incendiary charisma a match for the cocky, combustible Human Torch. It's a colour-blind casting choice that has, predictably, stirred up the more conservative corners of the internet - "It used to bother me, but it doesn't anymore," Jordan says of the backlash - but Torch co-creator Stan Lee, for one, is a true believer. You imagine that's the only approval he needs. "I grew up loving comic books so I was a big fan," Jordan tells us. "It's great to get to play a character like this. It's a big deal to me."

#### So what can we expect from this version of the Fantastic Four?

It's the Fantastic Four! These are characters you may be familiar with, but you're seeing them in a new, fresh way. It's a different take. I think the film is grounded in real emotions - you get to

know these characters and hopefully care about them. They're learning about themselves at the same time. It's a superhero movie, but a grounded superhero movie.

#### CIODATA

- OCCUPATION: Actor
- **BORN:** 9 February 1987 FROM: Santa Ana.
- California GREATEST HITS:
- Fruitvale Station, Red Tails, Chronicle. The Wire. Parenthood RANDOM FACT: Jordan
- was a contender for the role of the Falcon in Captain America: The Winter Soldier.

#### Is it fair to say it takes from a few different eras of the comic books?

Yeah, it kind of takes from all over the place, but particularly the *Ultimate* series. I think the elements were put together very strategically by Simon [Kinberg, producer] and Josh Trank [director] to support the story they wanted to tell.

#### How do you see Johnny?

▶ Well, Johnny's Johnny, you know! Like all of them, he's figuring out who he is. He's

charismatic. He's fun. But he's got to deal with stuff. That's what this is about. It's about when life throws curve balls at you, how you adapt. How do you deal with obstacles that you may encounter in your life? I was excited to do it. I didn't really need to research the role as I was a huge Fantastic Four and comic book fan already.

#### What's Johnny's dynamic with the other three?

The Fantastic Four that people remember were already established as a group, but here, that group is not established yet. That journey has to happen to get us to the place that people know. This is an origin story. These characters meet each other, mostly for the first time. So we become those

characters over the course of the film. Ben and Reed are best friends, but Johnny doesn't necessarily agree with what Ben's doing and then Victor's there and it kind of becomes this sort of jousting for attention. Over the film the chemistry comes together, that family dynamic that everyone is familiar with.

#### "It's a superhero movie, but a grounded superhero movie"

#### Are you a fan of superhero movies in general?

Yes, I definitely am. I'm a big Iron Man fan. I also really like the X-Men. First Class and Days Of Future Past are my favourites. I'm a fan of all of it, really.

#### Is there a particular pressure on you making a superhero movie, knowing there are a lot of people out there who are very passionate about this genre and very vocal if they disapprove?

Fans are very passionate about their properties and stories they grew up with, so as an actor you try to take it as seriously as you would anything else. Do the homework if you're not familiar. I believe if you put your best effort into it you'll do it right by the fans.

#### This new Fantastic Four feels almost like a hard science fiction movie. Would that be fair to say?

I think we prided ourselves on taking the science part of it seriously. We had some of the smartest guys there for authenticity to make sure that the science we were referencing was as true to life as possible.

#### What are the benefits of working with a director you've worked with before?

The chemistry is definitely stronger. It allows the communication to be that much better. You know one another's tendencies, what they like and don't like. Communication is most important on set, so when you have that with a director the second and third time around it's just that much stronger.

#### How has Josh Trank changed since you last worked

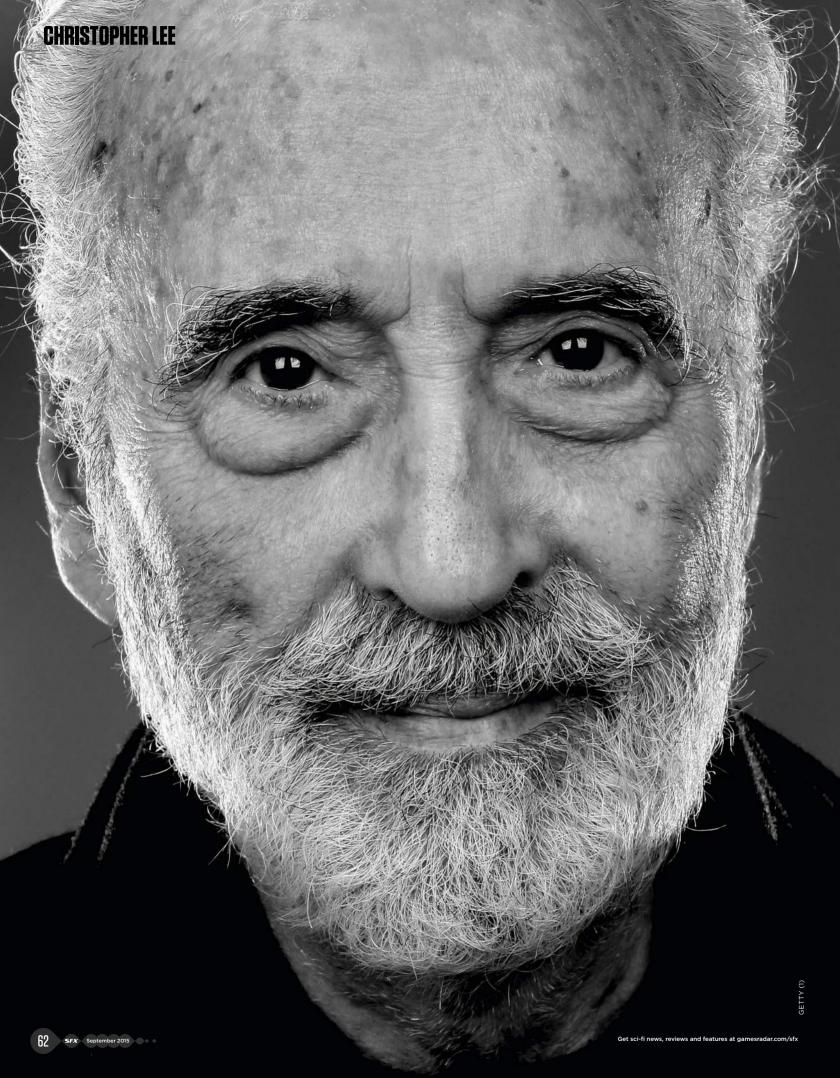
I think he stopped smoking cigarettes and lost some weight. The guy looks great! He's more focused. From project to project you hope to get better and be more understanding of what you do and other people's jobs and I think he has progressed in all those areas.

#### What does it feel like when you see yourself on screen with superpowers?

It's really cool. All your imagination and fantasies as a comic book fan growing up come to life. You know when you're a kid and you're playing and figuring out what super power you would want to have? Well, actually getting to visualise it and have it not just in your head is awesome!

Fantastic Four opens on 6 August.





# Dark Hanight

Ian Berriman pays tribute to Sir Christopher Lee, who died in June

ir Christopher Lee met his end many times on the big screen, but death was usually little more than a temporary inconvenience. As Dracula, he was disintegrated by sunlight; impaled by wagon wheel, gravestone and fencepost; set alight by lightning strike. But the only thing which could finally finish off the Count was Lee's own growing disdain for the role. The cause of the actor's death was more prosaic – complications related to respiratory problems and heart failure – and horribly permanent. But in his passing he's achieved a more meaningful immortality than his Transylvanian alter ego: a position in the pantheon of great British actors.

Lee would wince, of course, on reading a tribute that associates him with the part that thrust him into the full glare of the public spotlight. And that's understandable. Lee lived a remarkable life, and Dracula was just one of hundreds of roles in a career spanning 67 years.

Born in 1922, Lee had a privileged upbringing – until his banker stepfather went bankrupt. His mother was an Italian Contessa from a dynasty descended from Charlemagne, first Holy Roman Emperor; but for the rules of primogeniture he

would have been a Count. Young Christopher learnt to ride a horse and shoot pheasant; just failing to make the grade for an Eton scholarship, he boarded at Wellington College, Berkshire. Lee's start in life was the perfect preparation for the patrician parts that later came his way, and ensured he was at home in elevated circles: holidaying with his friend Paul (billionaire Jean Paul Getty); hanging out with Hugh Hefner; playing golf with the Count of Barcelona.

After school came service. Much of Lee's war was spent in Africa. A career as a pilot stalled due to a suspect optic nerve. But adventure was not in short supply: he shot at wild boar from a galloping horse; he was pursued by a pack of angry baboons. He ran from bombs as they ripped apart a Libyan airstrip and, as part of a role building dossiers on war crimes, visited Auschwitz and Birkenau.

After demob, it was an Italian cousin who suggested Lee try acting – and helped him get a foot in the door at Rank. Future Bond director Terence Young gave him his first role, in 1948's Corridor Of Mirrors, and there was a decent part in Scott Of The Antarctic. Other jobs were less impressive: he was a stand-in for screen tests, and was loaned to a repertory theatre in Worthing. Then Rank

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#### **CHRISTOPHER LEE**

unceremoniously dropped him. "Too tall, too foreign looking," was the explanation. Fortunately, while his towering 6' 4" height and brooding Mediterranean looks were an obstacle to leading man roles, they made him a perfect fit for the Sinister Foreigner.

The part which changed the direction of his life came at 34, when Hammer asked Lee's agent to find a statuesque actor to play the creature in 1957's *The Curse Of Frankenstein*. It came down to Lee or future *Carry On* star Bernard Bresslaw. Bresslaw wanted too much money, so Lee got the gig. He approached it thoughtfully, deciding that, "my hands must have independent life and my movements must be sudden and unbalanced". Though buried beneath mortician's wax, rubber and cotton wool, he still managed to inspire pity as well as fear.

He applied the same serious-mindedness to 1959's *The Mummy*, as the bandaged avenger stalking the infidels who desecrated his beloved's tomb. In between painfully crashing through scenery, "F-ing and blinding away at the top of my voice" as he did (since his mouth couldn't be seen) Lee skilfully conveyed sadness and longing via his eyes. Years later he explained his approach to playing these monsters: "Beneath the grotesque exterior, each one struggles with a very humanising dilemma."

He applied that same philosophy to the part that made him a horror icon: Dracula. Reading Bram Stoker's novel, he decided, "here's a man who is romantic, erotic and heroic: that's the way I should play him". Nowadays it's taken as read that vampires are sexy; not so in 1958. Lee's charismatic Count, who seemed to bring victims under his thrall more by seduction than hypnosis, soon swept away the cobwebbed image of Bela Lugosi. Again, Lee strove to inject pathos. "I thought of Dracula as rather



human, with a terrible solitude of evil." The only fly in the ointment was the red contacts: "I was constantly crashing into people and falling over things."

#### An Englishman abroad

The '60s saw Lee working largely on the continent, settling in Switzerland for several years for tax reasons; it helped that he was a prodigious linguist. Not all these productions were the pinnacle of professionalism. Arriving to dub 1964's Castle Of The Living Dead, he was informed they'd lost all the sound. And on the release of Jess Franco's Eugenie... The Story Of Her Journey Into Perversion, he was aghast to discover he'd been cut into takes where other

actors were naked; what's more, a woman in shot behind him was starkers; they'd covered her up whenever Franco shouted "Cut!"

When he returned to Britain, it was often for the company who made his name. He played "Mad Monk" Rasputin; he was High Priest to Ursula Andress's She Who Must Be Obeyed; *The Devil Rides Out* saw him on the side of the angels for once, as occult expert the Duc de Richleau. But the role Hammer were most keen for him to play was Dracula.

Lee resisted manfully: eight years passed before resurrection in *Dracula: Prince Of Darkness* (1966). Lee claimed he despised Dracula's dialogue so much that he refused to speak a word of it – though writer Jimmy

#### CLASSIC MOMENTS FIVE OF CHRISTOPHER LEE'S MOST MEMORABLE SCENES



#### **GET ON UP**

The Curse Of Frankenstein

Inviting his friend Paul into his lab, Frankenstein proudly shows off the results of his latest brain surgery. When the Baron snaps his fingers, the Creature awkwardly rises and staggers forward, hands hanging limp, dragging its feet, uncomprehendingly glancing around. Then, on command, it drops to the floor, like a trained dog. A masterpiece of mime by Lee, it's steeped in pathos.



#### VIOLENCE IN THE LIBRARY

Dracula

Lee could showcase his humanity as Dracula, but this scene shows the flip side of the coin. As a vampire woman tries to feed on his new librarian, Dracula bursts through a door, eyes blazing, fangs bared and bloody. Then he leaps over a table, hurls her to the floor and carries her off. Lee could do suave, but he could also project feral physical power.



#### **LORDING IT OVER**

The Wicker Man

The first meeting between Edward Woodward's Sergeant Howie and Lee's Summerisle is a perfect lesson in delivering exposition, but it's the verbal fencing that delights, as the amused pagan Lord flashes a full-beam smile at the god-fearing copper and describes Jesus as "son of a virgin, impregnated, I believe, by a ghost". Buttoned-up plod is hopelessly out-matched.



#### **HOSTILE TAKEOVER**

The Man With The Golden Gu

Playing an assassin whose weapon slots together from a cigarette case, lighter, pen and cufflink was a challenge for Lee but he nailed it for this scene. As Scaramanga's boss Hai Fat lectures him about interfering, the assassin casually sits in his chair, assembles his gun, shoots him, and exits with a quip: "Mr Fat has just resigned." It's everything you want from a Bond villain.



#### **TALKING THE ORC**

The Lord Of The Rings

Lee's defining moment as Saruman comes in *The Two Towers*. After assembling the biggest bomb the world of men has ever seen, the white wizard glides out onto his balcony, where an army of Orcs wait on his every word. The imagery echoes Nuremberg, but it's Lee's sonorous delivery that truly chills. "There will be no dawn for men," he declares. And you believe him.



#### A LEE MISCELLANY

Five things you probably didn't know about Christopher Lee

- As a young boy, Lee was hauled out of bed to meet two of Rasputin's assassins: Prince Yusupov and Grand Duke Pavlovich. Decades later, he played the Tsar's adviser for Hammer.
- 2 Lee attended the same prep school as Avengers star Patrick Macnee. The pair trod the boards together in Henry V and Richard III.
- S Lee lost his virginity at the age of 25, at the Savoy. "I was amazed by the amount of energy produced... more than once I fell off the bed."
- Lee once lived next door to fellow horror icon Boris Karloff. He joked that when they left their houses simultaneously, "people expected to see body-bags dumped on the pavement".
- Two parts which Lee turned down were Leslie Nielsen's role in Airplane!, and Dr Loomis in Halloween

Sangster insisted that he never *wrote* any. Either way, this most articulate of actors was reduced to spitting and snarling.

Five more outings followed; with each, Lee's frustration increased. The third, *Dracula Has Risen From The Grave*, came about after Lee found the film had been pre-sold to the US with him attached. When the actor demurred, Hammer's James Carreras resorted to emotional blackmail, phoning Lee to say, "I'm begging you to make these films, because if you don't, think of the people you will put out of work: the technicians, the actors and actresses." Understandably, resentment grew.

Lee also wanted to honour Stoker by staying faithful to his work. Appalled by a speech in *Dracula AD 1972* that suggested Dracula was Satan, he vetoed it. On both that film and *The Satanic Rites Of Dracula* he inserted lines paraphrasing passages from the novel. The bonkers plot of the latter, in which the Count plans to wipe out humanity with bubonic plague, was the final straw. Afterwards, he baldly declared: "I will not play that character anymore. I no longer wish to do it." Dracula was, finally, dead.

#### After Dracula

Two of Lee's most memorable roles swiftly followed. In 1973's *The Wicker Man*, Lee played Lord Summerisle, leader of a pagan society at whose hands Edward Woodward's policeman meets a sticky end... Urbane and articulate, possessed of a wry sense of humour, and driven by sincerely held beliefs, Summerisle was, as director Robin Hardy put it, "a different kind of villain". The role was specially tailored for him by writer Anthony Shaffer, a friend who'd promised to write the disgruntled Lee "an intelligent horror film". "Lord Summerisle," Lee later explained, "in his way of talking and sense of humour... is really an amalgam of Anthony Shaffer, Robin Hardy and Christopher Lee."

Then came triple-nippled assassin
Scaramanga in 1974's *The Man With The Golden Gun*. A Bond part could have come sooner: 007
creator Ian Fleming was Lee's step-cousin, and in 1962 pressed producers to cast him as Dr
No. Perhaps it was for the best that they didn't, since Lee enjoyed that director Guy Hamilton encouraged him to approach the killer like

"His career should have been winding down, but his Hammer typecasting had a silver lining" "a boy with a toy", bringing out a lighter side.
"He got the Dracula out of me," Lee said. Not that he left the Count behind entirely... filming in Thailand, Lee and Roger Moore entered a cave; on seeing bats in flight, Lee jokingly cried, "Back Stanislaw! Not now!"

The one thing which had eluded Lee was Hollywood success, so in 1977 he upped sticks to try his luck in LA. The resulting roles were not of the first order: he died again in disaster movie *Airport '77*; played the leader of a gang of gay Hell's Angels; and was the Duke of Edinburgh in a Charles and Di TV movie. He *did* work for Spielberg... but on comedy flop 1941. LA life didn't agree with Lee either, and the mid-'80s found him back home in Blighty.

#### Leaving on a high

As Lee's life entered its third act, his career should have been winding down, but his Hammer typecasting had a silver lining, as a generation of directors had grown up loving those performances. Joe Dante cast Lee as a mad professor in 1990's *Gremlins 2*; Tim Burton followed suit with 1999's *Sleepy Hollow*. Then, in 2000, two giant roles followed. Playing Sith Lord Count Dooku in *Attack Of The Clones* brought Lee his first, bewildering experience of green-screen work – and treated us to the sight of the 78-year-old actor whirling and twirling as he duelled with a somersaulting CGI Yoda.

Landing a Lord Of The Rings role was a particular joy for Lee, who read the book every year and had long dreamed of playing Gandalf; though now too old, he was happy with the consolation prize of sorcerer Saruman – especially as Peter Jackson's attention to detail matched his own. These two parts introduced Lee to a new audience who'd never seen him staked. Finally, the long shadow cast by Dracula was fading away.

Christopher Lee was the last of a generation of horror greats; his passing brings the curtain down on an era. He'll probably be remembered rather differently to his friend Peter Cushing. Whereas Cushing accepted his lot with equanimity, Lee's desire to stretch himself could create the impression that he was prickly or pompous. And while Cushing was every Hammer fan's fantasy grandfather, someone you might share a buttered scone with in a Whitstable tea shop, Lee, with his erudite interests and establishment connections, was out of reach; an object of awe.

Friends and colleagues saw other sides to him. Stories abound of on-set larking about: filming *Frankenstein*, he and Cushing performed impromptu musical numbers and sang snatches of opera. He was still at it in Middle-earth, showing off the knife-throwing skills acquired as a boy; Dominic Monaghan fondly recalls how Lee "threw a Bic pen into a tree in front of me." Sir Christopher Lee demanded respect – and won it. But if we'd had more opportunities to see beyond that imposing, sometimes austere public image, we'd have grown to love him a little more too.

Christopher Lee, 27 May 1922 - 7 June 2015



The prequel series to The Walking Dead sounds just as terrifying, Joseph McCabe discovers



OR FIVE SEASONS, THE

Walking Dead has terrified TV viewers with creator Robert Kirkman's nightmarish vision of a zombie apocalypse, showcasing the savagery of both mankind and its horrific undead offspring. But beyond horror there lies something worse... Fear.

The brainchild of Kirkman and showrunner Dave Erickson, Fear The Walking Dead explores the early days of the zombie virus outbreak, which led to the decimated landscape explored by its parent show. Centred this time in a city, Los Angeles, Fear follows one engaged couple, Madison (Kim Dickens) and Travis (Cliff Curtis), each a single parent, as they fight for a new life even as the world around them crumbles to pieces.

Erickson speaks with SFX from his LA office about how the first Walking Dead spin-off series came to be...

"I wrote the pilot based on an idea, a treatment that Robert wrote years ago, which was how we first met," says the executive producer, who's just returned from the show's set in Vancouver. "I found him to be an

#### "IT'S VERY MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU DON'T SEE"

incredibly great collaborator. When he first called me about *Fear*, we sat down and broke the pilot and talked about season one."

Erickson describes *Fear The Walking Dead* as more steeped in psychological horror than the series from which it sprang.

"When Robert and I first sat down and started talking about this, it was in the context of, in terms of chronology and timeline, this period when Rick Grimes was in his coma. So loosely speaking our story starts around the same time Rick was shot and what we're really doing is exploring the few weeks from

the beginning of the outbreak until it really starts to reach critical mass. It's very much a slow burn. It's very much about what you don't see in the first few episodes. Something is wrong. There's paranoia. There's anxiety. There's tension. One of our family members sees something in the beginning of the show, but doesn't know if he's losing his mind. He doesn't know if it's something he ingested. He's trying to wrap his brain around what he saw, and what he saw is not of this world. There's tension for our characters as they get up to speed and realise this virus, this whatever, is actually turning people. There's also anticipation for the audience of course. I think everyone coming to this show knows the genre and definitely knows The Walking Dead, and it's partly playing with the anxiety and the worry of 'When are these characters going to catch up? When are they gonna start to realise what this really is? And will they realise too late?""

#### **FAMILY DRAMA**

The showrunner insists that while *Fear The Walking Dead* will offer the social allegory

#### **FEAR THE WALKING DEAD**

that walks hand in hand with tales of paranoia, the show is first and foremost a family drama.

"We really tend to spend the bulk of our first episode and then into our second episode dealing with the problems that go with trying to build a new family. Travis has just moved in recently. He's divorced, he's got a very resentful, angry teenage son. Then Madison has a son and a daughter, a son who has some significant problems and a daughter who is quite driven and independent and has plans for the future. And it's very much about these two people - Travis and Madison - who do love each other. In our minds, it was and should be a very strong relationship. What's interesting is, as things begin to accelerate and as they begin to realise the world is changing, the attributes that they see in each other, that they love in each other, start to change a little bit. It becomes a real challenge to their relationship. The attributes of goodness and nobility and all the things we really appreciate in people in normal times, they can start to compromise you when you live in the zombie apocalypse. So they will start to see each other in different ways and they will do things they never thought they could do before. It will be an interesting process in that relationship, seeing how they can reconcile the person they love with the circumstances at hand."

#### **BE PREPARED**

Those circumstances prove even more challenging for the protagonists of Fear The Walking Dead than those of The Walking Dead, since, unlike Rick Grimes, neither Travis nor Madison is a policeman trained to handle crises.

"Travis is an English Lit teacher in high school, Madison is a guidance counsellor at the same school," explains Erickson. "That's how they met. We really don't have any characters in the beginning of our show who are at all prepared for this. They don't have the life skills. They don't have the things that Rick and Shane had in their toolkit when the world ended. That's actually something that will become very interesting, because we won't really get to this point probably until season two, when it really comes down to survival, when it comes down to having to find food, having to find water, having to find shelter; the things that you need to survive. Then having to defend those things. They've never been trained for that. We'll be dealing much, much more with this fish-out-of-water sensibility. That's not to say that Rick and Shane weren't also dealing with a completely new world, but they did have some tools that our characters don't. Which I think will be fun for the audience to watch."

Fear is further distinguished from The Walking Dead by virtue of the fact that it is not, at least in its early episodes, a story that takes place on the road.

"We're not really road-tripping it," confirms Erickson. "That's something we'll eventually





get to, but we really wanted to stay in our city and be able to explore it as much as we could. We didn't want to abandon Los Angeles too quickly. A big part of the show is about the disintegration of society as seen through the disintegration of this family. But we do want to show the gradual fall of a major city. There were thematic and creative reasons for choosing Los Angeles, but we also wanted something that was distinctive, and distinctly not rural Georgia. To live in an urban setting for the bulk of the show was something that was different and distinct from the other show."

#### **FRESH MEAT**

Since Fear The Walking Dead takes place in the early days of the outbreak, Erickson says we can expect to see a different breed of walker than those that have come to infest The Walking Dead.

"I think Amy [in season one] was probably the best example from the original show of a partially turned walker... Some of our characters will meet violent ends. So they may bear wounds, they may be bloodied up. But for the most part, our walkers will have their



#### "WE WANT TO SHOW THE FALL OF A CITY"

distinctive look but they definitely do not have the monstrous features that the atrophied, rotting walkers have on the original show.

"What was important to Robert when we first sat down was that as difficult as they are physically to kill, emotionally and psychologically there's a trauma to it as well. What I find interesting is that when confronted by a family member, a friend, a colleague, somebody you had coffee with the day before and they're attacking you, your instinct is not gonna be, 'Okay, this person's dead.' It's gonna be, 'This person is sick. This person's on something.' You want to defend vourself, but you also want to help. You want to take care of these people. Slowly what we did is just introduce the realisation that these people are gone. So when you have to actually do violence to protect yourself, it's a lot of weight. Especially if it's somebody you knew. That became something interesting to explore. What would really happen if you had to put down somebody who you cared about? Not fully knowing what this is, not knowing if there is some miracle cure that's gonna come along in the next few days. Not knowing if in a week somebody's gonna say, 'You know that guy you killed? We're gonna take you away.'

"This is a whole new world," adds Erickson.
"The opportunity to explore the fall and to see the pieces, to see the city coming down and our family fractured, it allows us to explore some parts of the world, part of this mythology Robert created, in a different way."

Fear The Walking Dead will air on AMC in both the US and the UK.

# RETURN OF THE ZONG BIE

Walking Dead executive producer and make-up FX maestro Greg Nicotero introduces a different kind of walker...



How do the newborn walkers of Fear The Walking Dead differ from those of The Walking Dead?
The cool thing about Fear is that it's one of those situations where you're walking down the street and you see somebody who's walking a little slower, but you

don't know, you would never think in normal life that there's something wrong with that person.

So it's like the beginning of Shaun Of The Dead? That's actually a really good analogy. On The Walking Dead we push the envelope every season, because we're a year and half after the zombie apocalypse. So we're constantly striving to push that. What's creepier about Fear The Walking Dead is the aspect that people don't recognise [walkers] immediately. They think someone might just be sick or not feel well or just look a little weird. But you would never stop on the street and go, "Oh my god, that's a monster!" You would probably go to the opposite side of the street and avoid them.

We've heard the walkers in Fear The Walking Dead are less decomposed than those in The Walking Dead. But have you created some we might still see as action figures?

Oh for sure. We still have an obligation to have those moments where we have the audience stop and go, "Oh my god! Did I just see that?" That's sort of the fun of the show – pushing those moments where people see something and they have to kind of comprehend it. I think on Fear we're able to play those moments off the characters. The characters see something horrible happening and you play that confusion and fear off of how they react.





#### NEW YORK CITY IS DOOMED.

The city that never sleeps is being overrun by bloodsuckers and humanity is facing extinction. That's the chilling premise of FX's horror hit The Strain, an adaptation of the book trilogy penned by director Guillermo del Toro and writer Chuck Hogan. The show's first season documented the outbreak of a virulent strain of vampirism originating at JFK International Airport. CDC (Centre for Disease Control) scientist Dr Ephraim "Eph" Goodweather (Corey Stoll) and his colleague Dr Nora Martinez (Mia Maestro) discovered that the wormy, parasitic carriers found in a coffin in a plane's cargo hold originated from an uber vampire known as the Master. By season's end it was clear the ancient one had arrived to take over the world, starting with the Big Apple...

Del Toro and executive producer/ showrunner Carlton Cuse and del Toro ended that first season on a serious cliffhanger. With Eph's estranged wife turned vampire, humanity knows of the infestation due to a viral video. More crucially, a plan by Professor Abraham Setrakian (David Bradley) to expose the Master to a potentially lethal dose of sunbeams was a shocking fail.

Cuse says season two picks up with all of the ensuing chaos. "It's really a mosaic of New York in crisis," the showrunner tells SFX. "The different responses and the different groups of characters who have to fight this plague. We are watching the demise of New York. In a lot of genre shows, the situation is a pre-condition. In The Walking Dead, the series opens with the dead already walking the Earth. But our show is really all about walking characters through the world. We are watching the city fall over the course of the season. The question is can

Turn and face the second season of *The Strain*, with Tara Bennett as your guide

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people fight back? It's not a one-sided battle this season. The motto is fight or die."

#### EXPANDING THE STORY

Loosely based on the narrative of *The Fall*, the second book in the trilogy, Cuse says the show has necessarily broadened what del Toro and Hogan charted in their novels. "Guillermo and I have always said the first season was the first book. The second book is season two and three and the third book will be seasons four and five. But in order to sustain the storytelling for two seasons, we needed to do a lot of invention.

"We follow the general narrative arc of the book," Cuse continues. "You could read the book and have a great experience but then watch the show and not feel like it's repetitive. When translating a story to a different medium, you have to find the best version of the story for that medium. Chuck Hogan is even one of the writers on the series. They have been extremely open about the process of invention. I think the television show is its own unique, rich tapestry. There are lots of characters and storylines that are in the book that we follow using the same general narrative but specifically, the show is its own thing. And it's been fun to enhance stories in this world and take cool kernels from the book and expand them. It's better than the first season and pretty kick ass."

One big question that motivates this season is how do you kill a vampire that isn't felled by sunshine, a tried and true trope of almost every vampire story out there? Cuse chuckles. "Certainly the important take away is that the Master not getting fried in sunlight has consequences and they play out right at the beginning of our season in the first six episodes. The good news is that Setrakian feels like he failed because he didn't kill the Master but his actions have significant consequences and that's a fun part of the storytelling to see how that plays out.

"The two major missions for our protagonists are that Eph and Nora are on the [epidemiology trail], and Fet (Kevin Durand) and Setrakian are trying to get the Lumen, this book.

There's a lot of mystery and lore about the book. First, does it exist? Secondly if it does exist, is it what it is purported to be – an actual manual that will allow you to kill the Master? So Setrakian is very actively engaged in trying to find that book and get his hands on it."

DIRE CRISIS

Eph has the CDC supporting his efforts now, but he's still got a son, Zach (recast this season with actor Max Charles) to



#### "GUILLERMO DID A MASTERFUL JOB BRINGING : THE CREATURES TO LIFE"

protect from his vampire mother and a dire global crisis on his shoulders. No wonder he's slipping off the wagon trying to deal with it all... "Alcohol is the way of him dealing with some of [his demons]. It becomes a factor in some of his decision-making this season and there are consequences to that. His personal behaviour resonates into the show.

"But more important than anything is that we do make some changes with his hair," Cuse laughs, alluding to the audience's vocal negative reaction to naturally bald actor Corey Stoll's hairpiece. "It was like 'Hair-gate'," Cuse says. "Everybody got crazy about his hair! From the beginning, Guillermo and I talked about how it's a construct of how the character will evolve. So you'll see how it pays off this season. Hopefully the millions upon millions of people who are waiting on that will be happy with the resolution of that story," the showrunner laughs.

Not so amusing is the way this season will up the ante with the ever-evolving turned – or Strigoi as they're known in the show's mythology. "One of the things that attracted me to the property was that it had this great multi-level mythology and all different forces of antagonism," Cuse says. "Narratively, I wanted to unleash more and different forces of antagonism in the second season and Guillermo and I were very much in line with that. He did a masterful job bringing some of these creatures to life."

Cuse teases that there will be a brand new evolution of vampires that will scare the hell



out of viewers. And he confirms that "This vampire thing is spreading exponentially, so there are a lot more vampires." As they learn to evade their human enemies, they will only get more dangerous, crafty and terrible, it seems. Cuse promises there will be no de-fanging of their vampires as the season unfolds. "One of the critical elements of the books was this idea of taking vampires back to their origin and to their roots. The world doesn't need another version of sparkling, romantic, brooding dudes, you know? Vampires with girl problems," he





chuckles. "We've turned this into something special and cool that feels different, like it has its own unique place in the genre landscape."

### FIGHTING BACK

Cunning as the Strigoi and company may be, Cuse says a huge component of the story will be showing how humanity steps up their game trying to save its city and species. Aside from Goodweather, Setrakian and Fet, other familiar



faces like "Gus" Elizalde (who unwittingly helped transport the Master's coffin into the city last year) and Dutch Velders (Ruta Gedmintas) will be back to fight. Also look for new characters like Samantha Mathis's Justine Feraldo, a councillor who uses her political and police connections to fight the plague.

Cuse describes the different factions all over the city fighting the good fight as a mosaic of characters and storylines that expands *The Strain* into more epic, yet personal storytelling. "I think what was interesting to me about this entire story and one of the things that I loved about Guillermo and Chuck's books was that it was these different characters in New York experiencing this apocalyptic event. It felt like something that we needed to retain in turning it into a TV show. So there are crossovers with a lot of our main characters co-existing but we are following a lot of different storylines."

And don't fear for humanity just yet. We're fighting back. "The idea in seasons two and three is that this is not a story where vampires simply overrun the world and win. This is a story where human ingenuity rises to meet the challenge. It turns into a fair fight on a lot of levels. A very epic fight."

As to how the rest of America views New York City, Cuse says that's also addressed this year. "There is a window on more of what's going on in the country. We get some sense of how New York stands relative to the rest of the country but the focus of the story is really what is going on in [the city]."

As to the long-range goals of the series, Cuse is clear they want five seasons to tell their story, admitting they've planned out their narrative with that destination in mind.

"There are certain landmarks that Guillermo and I have discussed, like where we are going to end. I know where we're going to end season three and what the components are going to be between now and then. Also what, in general, will comprise the other two seasons of the show." But even with a vampire apocalypse, Cuse says he likes to leave some room for surprise. "It's a little like taking a road trip and you know you're going to go from here to Los Angeles and you're going to visit certain cities along the way. But you give yourself latitude to some days take the interstate and some days take the back roads..."

The Strain airs on Watch (UK) and FX (US).

# Cover Stories

Brian Aldiss talks us through key books from his career via their covers. Jonathan Wright listens in

• PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOBY SESSIONS

he folders have been lovingly assembled. Each contains not just images of the book jackets that have graced Brian Aldiss's work down the years, but the author's own notes on what he remembers of writing these volumes. Assembling these folders was, he says, "jolly expensive to do because I had to get every cover photographed".

At one point, there was talk of Oxford's Bodleian Library creating a book from this project. It never quite happened. "They stalled because they realised they'd have to pay for copyright [to reprint the artwork]," says Aldiss

Shame, but all is not lost. With Aldiss turning 90 in August, these folders offer a prism through which to view one of the most remarkable careers in SF, which is how SFX comes to be sitting with Aldiss in his living room in Headington, a room that overlooks a somehow appropriately fantastical garden where the pond, on closer inspection, turns out to be a former swimming pool half-choked with water weed.

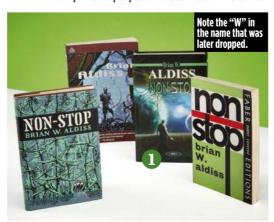
The topic of our discussion? Seven books and their various covers, why these books are

important to Brian, and why he likes – or in certain cases, dislikes – the imagery used to sell them. Perhaps, considering his occasional disdain for the jackets, he should have done his own covers? After all, he's exhibited his artwork. Moreover, publishers Voyager are currently preparing a facsimile edition of his first, unpublished book, *The Adventures Of Whip Donovan Among the Planets*, which he not only wrote but illustrated when he was 14, "mainly to amuse my sister, Betty".

Aldiss harrumphs, something at which he's adept. "There was always enough going on," he says.

Non-Stop (1958)

THE BOOK: Aldiss's first science fiction novel is a claustrophobic tale of life aboard a multigenerational starship where knowledge of the ship and its purpose has been lost. "There was



intense feeling behind that book where I felt that I was imprisoned by circumstance," he says. "That's what it's about really."

Aldiss is referring to his experiences in the wake of serving in the jungle in Burma during World War Two. "After the Japanese capitulated, one was still stuck out there [in south-east Asia]," he says. "It was impossible to get back to the UK."

When he did travel home, aboard RMS Arundel Castle rather than a spaceship, arriving in England was miserable. "We all said to each other, 'Wow, three years away, there's going to be a great celebration when we get back there, bound to give us a party.' We sailed into Liverpool docks, empty, not even a lousy sergeant-major, no one there at all, nobody cared. And indeed, to get back into grimy little Britain, they celebrated my return by putting bread on ration."

**THE COVER:** Aldiss says he hates the numerous covers that show a starship. In contrast, "I was particularly pleased by this cover by this Polish artist ①, who showed the interior of the ship, where after all everything happens, *looking out* on the world."

### Hothouse (1962)

THE BOOK: Initially serialised in *The Magazine Of Fantasy & Science Fiction, Hothouse* imagines an Earth where (the jungle again) one side side constantly faces the Sun. It's a "world gone mad, all covered with forest" and where rampant plants have largely usurped animals.

A key moment of inspiration came in Calcutta while Aldiss waited to return to



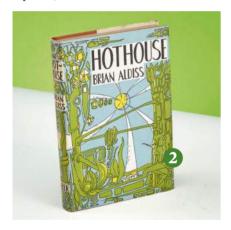
### **BRIAN ALDISS**

Blighty after serving in the army and went to see the Great Banyon Tree, famed for its vast canopy and believed to be around 1,200 years old.

"I took a little boat across the River Hooghly to Calcutta Botanic Garden, and there they had what was claimed, on a large billboard, as the biggest tree in the world," he says. "Well most of us think of the biggest trees as like sequoias, going up. This didn't go up, it went outwards and was greatly cared for. Most of these things are eaten by goats – goats climb up into the branches."

Goats in trees, that's fascinating... "Yes, you could see them all over the place, it kind of summed up what a shithole we thought India was."

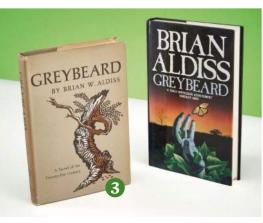
THE COVER: "I had a friend in Oxford, an artist, Oscar Mellor, and I got him a commission to do the cover [of the first edition] ②. And yes, I like it well enough. I thought there could be something more explosive, but that was what he did."



### Greybeard (1964)

**THE BOOK:** In so many respects one of Aldiss's bleakest books, *Greybeard* is set on a world where the population has been sterilised as a result of nuclear tests. The tale of Algy Timberlane grew from Aldiss "falling into hard times" amidst troubles with his marriage to his first wife, Olive Fortescue.

"Suddenly this dear wife of mine decided she hated Oxford and she would take the children, who were then very small, away to





live on the Isle of Wight," remembers Aldiss.

Aldiss sold the family home to pay for the relocation, but, in part reasoning that even "the lowliest American publisher" wouldn't have heard of the Isle of Wight, remained in Oxford himself. "I went to live in one room in what was then known as Paradise Square, which was a kind of Oxford slum, and really I was lost," he says. But he continued working, writing the "dreadful novel" that would be published as *Greybeard*.

"It sold like mad all over the place," he says. "Why? Because there must be very many people who are in a very unhappy parental or marital situation, and *Greybeard* kind of rings a bell. I don't know why, nor did I realise it was to be sold as science fiction."

THE COVER: More than half a century later, the first cover for the US market, by James and Ruth McCrea, still doesn't much impress Aldiss. "I didn't like that," he says simply. (3)

### Billion Year Spree: The True History Of Science Fiction (1973)

**THE BOOK:** Why did Aldiss choose to write a history of sci-fi? "Everyone was getting it wrong, but I knew how to get it right."

Aldiss was disgruntled with the way, as he saw it, "the Americans thought they'd invented science fiction" and decided to offer a different perspective. "The Americans had never heard of Jules Verne, Mary Shelley," he says. "What were they on about? So one day I sat down and started to write this whole, all-embracing book, and that's the way I have worked, on the whole, through life. If I wanted to do something, I would do it and see it through."



He acknowledges this may not be the best way to work and remembers Frederick Pohl advising him to get an editor "interested from the start", a way to prevent difficulties later: "Thanks Fred, I know that's good advice,' and from Fred it was good advice, he'd started writing as a child. But I wouldn't do it the way he wanted to do it, I wanted to do it my way."

THE COVER: Aldiss wanted the cover to be bright to attract attention, hence the yellow of the first edition 4. He also gave serious thought to the title: "Spree' is not actually a word I greatly like. After all, this is a very serious volume, but I thought if it was called Billion Year Spree, people will think well this can't be too bad and they would read it anyhow. Well, it appears to have worked."

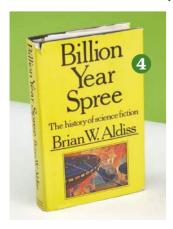
### The Malacia Tapestry (1976)

**THE BOOK:** The tale of thespian ne'er-do-well Perian de Chirolo is a picaresque fantasy that was partly inspired by the work of Italian artist GB Tiepolo (1696-1770).

It was also a book rooted in Aldiss's worries about his homeland. "My feeling was at the

in the same fictional world. "There's mention in the book of another rival society, a hundred miles down the road as it were," he says. "And I thought if I wrote about Malacia, I could then write about this better-run place down the road, but I couldn't think what a better-run place would be like, so I abandoned the idea." THE COVER: The UK first edition 6 features, appropriately, an etching by GB Tiepolo. An American paperback cover from 1978 for Ace Books is rather more lurid. When an editor from the company wrote to Aldiss requesting permission to do a reprint, he said yes, providing it didn't feature "this dinosaur feeling into the girl's bosom". The publisher's reply: "That's what sold the book."

# Helliconia trilogy (1982-85)





**THE BOOK:** Aldiss's magnum opus, an epic of the rise and fall of a civilisation on a planet where the seasons last for centuries.

"I wanted to get it right," he says. "You see, I was under the impression the previous books I had written were actually not science fiction, and so I wanted to do it, but do it *properly*. For two years, I wrote nothing, I just researched the project."

Seeing Didcot power station from the train helped Aldiss conjure up Helliconia's vegetation. "It was towards sunset and these six towers were emitting steam, which was blowing southwards, and with the sun behind them, these out-breathings looked black. And I thought, 'Yeah, Helliconia foliage!' This gave me the idea of the fact leaves don't fall [from the planet's trees] in the winter, they shrink back into the trunk, which then seals itself."

In 2011, it was announced that Nasa's Kepler space telescope had found a "new Earth", an exoplanet located 600 light years away in the so-called "Goldilocks zone" of its solar system. "The bastards didn't call it Helliconia. It's Planet ZXQ15 or something..."

The cover: "It's the top of a marvellous painting," he says of the image on the first edition of Helliconia Spring, which shows a detail from The Battle Of Alexander At Issus (1529) by German artist Albrecht Altdorfer 6. "I stood and looked at it for an hour. I chose it. It was part of the reason that I wanted to write the book, so I could use that cover."

### Finches Of Mars (2013)

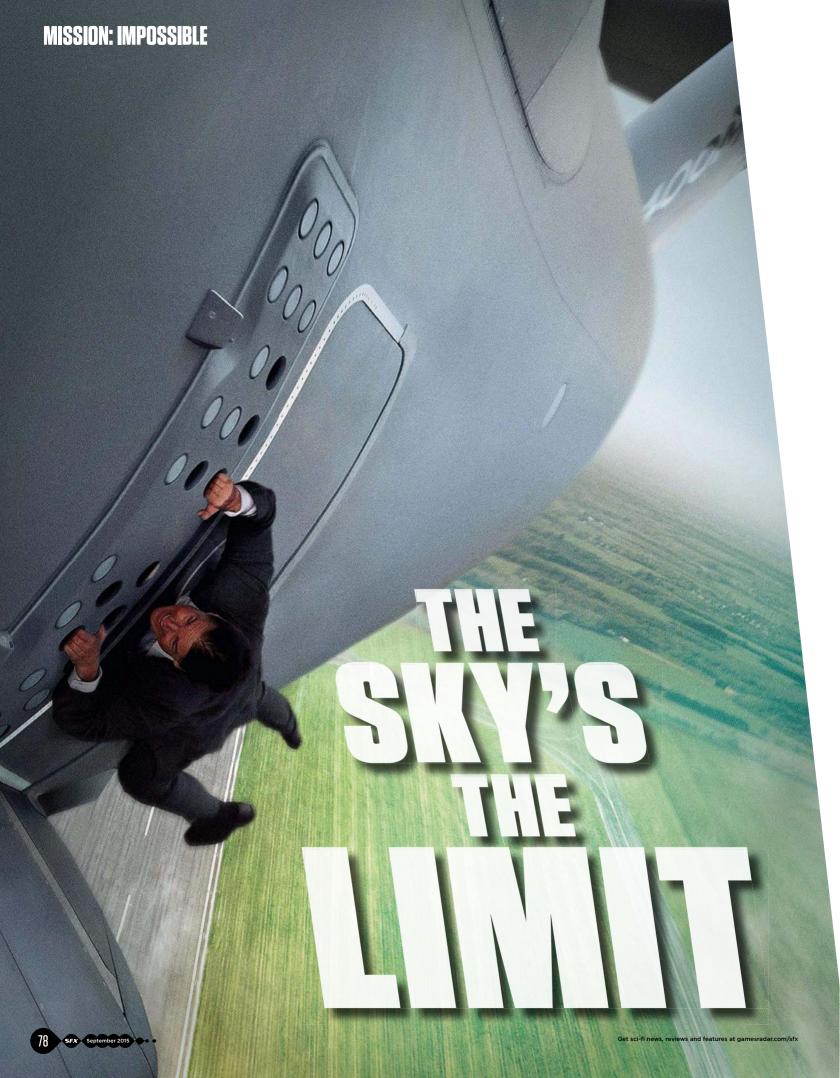
THE BOOK: Finches imagines a future where humankind has colonised the Red Planet, but where settlers are unable to have children.

Although the book was billed as Aldiss's farewell to SF, the man himself appears to be having second thoughts. "No, I don't think it's my last science fiction novel," he says. "It depends how long I can go on without interference from you people. Who knows? Come on, there's so much to be said and all the time things are changing."

Whatever the future might hold, it's a novel with roots deep in Aldiss's past. "The basis of this, although it's fairly recent, is the fact that my mother gave birth to a baby girl who died on delivery," he says. "And that started off all kinds of strange family doings, which I don't think we'll go into. So how long? Fifty or 60 years later, it's still on my mind."

There was another reason to concentrate on problems in childbirth, it was to give a female perspective on exploring the solar system: "I had actually become sick of all those stories where chaps in uniforms tramp over bits of Mars. Very rarely a woman tramping over Mars."

THE COVER: "This is the sort of cover that they do, what else can one say?" says Aldiss, dismissively. What would he have done? "I think I would have had a landscape, possibly with a stream of dead babies coming out of the nearest crater, much more appealing."





MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - ROGUE NATION SENDS ETHAN HUNT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE IN HIS MOST ACTION-FILLED ADVENTURE YET. THE PRODUCERS TELL JAYNE NELSON HOW THEY'VE UPPED THE ANTE YET AGAIN...

HAT'S TOM CRUISE GOING to do this time?" There's a good chance that this was the first thing that crossed your mind upon hearing that a new Mission: Impossible film was on the way. This is a franchise famous for its huge, jawdropping stunts, after all, and when it comes to sheer wow-factor, it's hard to beat the image of Cruise scaling the exterior of Dubai's Burj Khalifa skyscraper in 2011's Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol. When you've already dangled your leading man 154 storeys above the ground and given everybody watching a sickening bout of vertigo, where on Earth do you go next?

You leave the Earth entirely, of course, propelling your leading man into the air clinging to the side of a plane.

"The Burj sequence is obviously the most talked-about spectacle that Tom did in *Ghost Protocol*, and now you're making the next movie, you think: 'What are we gonna do to top that?'" laughs producer Don Granger. "But then [co-writer/director] Chris McQuarrie came up with an idea: 'Well, what if a plane took off and Ethan Hunt was stuck on it, and we shot it for real?'"

We've already seen a taster of the spectacular plane sequence in the trailer for *Mission: Impossible*– *Rogue Nation*, which reunites Cruise with cast-mates Simon Pegg, Ving Rhames and Jeremy Renner for the franchise's fifth outing. Within moments of the trailer's debut, everybody was talking about the shot – just the reaction the filmmakers were going for, and a reward for all their hard work. And we mean hard. Just finding a plane for Cruise to hug was tricky enough.

### FLYING HIGH

"An Airbus A400, a new military transport, was brought to our attention," says Granger. "We approached them with the idea of using their plane to do this, and they looked at us very sceptically... 'You wanna do what with our airplane?' And the planning that went into this was just mind-boggling. We sat down with engineers, their best pilots and the manufacturer of the door on the wing, figuring out aerodynamically whether this was possible, and one by one the boxes were ticked. I must say, it went incredibly well every time that Tom did it."

Wait. Cruise did this more than once?
"I lost count!" nods Granger, as *SFX*wonders how much sleep was lost by the film's
insurers. "It was supposed to be once, and then ⇒



### MISSION IMPOSSIBLE





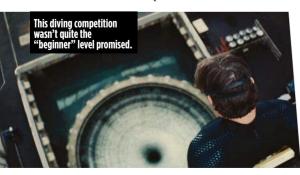
it was again, and then it was again, and then he and Chris looked at the shot and decided to change the lens and go a little bit closer, so we kept doing it. Tom was having a great time!"

Only after the sequence was shot, however, did Cruise let on that actually it hadn't been quite as much fun as he was making out, thanks to the combined perils of the plane's exhaust fumes and facefuls of dust and debris kicked up from the runway. "That was something that nobody else but Tom would've put up with, or put himself through, to get that shot," says Granger. "But that's really him!"

As you've probably gathered by now, when you talk to anybody involved in this movie the one thing they're all adamant to get across is that Cruise is the real deal. Check your cynicism at the door, folks: Tom did every single stunt on screen.

"Tom and Chris wanted to do everything practically, everything for real," explains producer Bryan Burk. "In the driving scenes, even if you can't see that it's him, it's him doing it."

This sounds like the kind of thing that would give filmmakers grey hairs: one mistake and you've lost your leading man. "I think producers are always mildly terrified no matter what's going on," agrees Granger, with a chuckle. "Every fight has to be incredibly well-choreographed. For example, there's a scene in the movie where Tom is fighting someone up on a scaffolding in the back of an opera house. We didn't shoot this two feet off the ground with greenscreen; we shot this 40-50ft up in the air in the back



The signature stunts of the franchise so far...

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (1996)
The first M:/ blockbuster produced two memorable stunt pieces: Ethan Hunt dangling by wires from a ceiling during a heist and then, later, escaping an exploding helicopter in the Channel Tunnel and landing on top of a train. The latter scene seemed epic in the '90s, but the CGI is risible when viewed today..



### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 2 (2000)

Cruise gamely spent five days rock-climbing on a cliff face in Utah and performed almost all of the stunts we see in this breathtaking all of the stunts we see in this breathtaking sequence – although his main stunt double, Keith Campbell (brave man!) filmed the heart-stopping moment in which Hunt slips. Was the climb integral to the plot? Not really. But it looked fabulous.



### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 3 (2006)

This film is the only one which doesn't feature a standout moment everybody can remember, despite being filled with all the usual explosions, fights and chases. If you haven't seen it for a while, the only stunt you'll probably recall is Ethan running from an exploding car and being propelled sideways into a parked vehicle. S'alright, we suppose.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - GHOST PROTOCOL (2011)

Cruise's climb up the outside of the Burj Khalifa - the world's tallest building - was filmed for real using cables (later removed by CGI), a wind machine (as the real wind failed to show up during filming) and lots of guts. Some crewmembers couldn't even enter the room with the window removed because of the height. Cruise didn't care.





of an opera house. So one slip of a punch while someone's off balance - it can put your movie down for a month!"

"Tom has been doing this for years; he's more confident than the stunt co-ordinators and he really knows what he's doing," Burk points out. "But it doesn't make it any less hair-raising, to know that he's doing things like that."

The emphasis on "real" stunts in Rogue Nation is heartening in an era that sees CGI playing a bigger and bigger part in moviemaking. "I love CGI when it's done well and when it's used properly," agrees Burk. "But when you're watching this movie, you really feel like you're watching a film; you're not feeling like it's all crafted after the fact."

There's another bonus to not relying so heavily on CGI, too: it saves time. "We were originally releasing this movie at the end of the year, a week after Star







Wars," adds Burk, who's working on both films. "Then the decision was made to move it up to the middle of the summer. What's amazing is that we moved the movie up six months earlier than was planned, which, if you had heavy CGI, would be impossible! It's testament to the fact that it's all in-camera. There's obviously visual FX and cleanup, but by no means did this hamper our ability to release the movie early."

"When you see CGI or digitally enhanced effects used so well, like in *Avengers* or *Jurassic World*, they're wonderful," says Granger, "but it does mean that when you have someone like Tom, who will do everything practically and for real, it becomes unique. Whereas that used to be the norm."

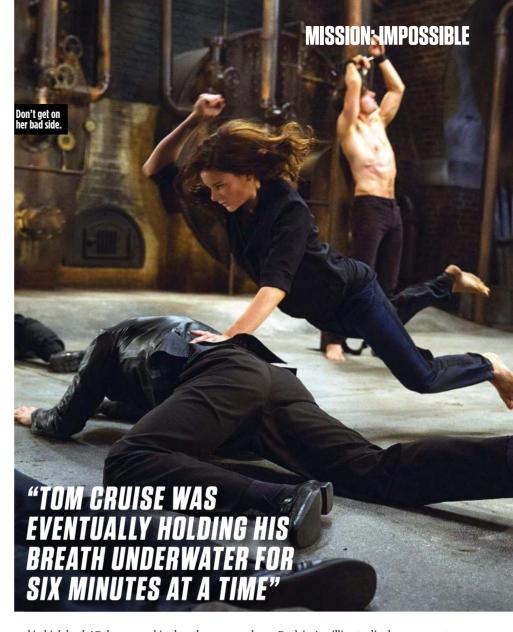
On top of his prowess at clinging to planes and driving cars (there's one frenetic chase sequence in *Rogue Nation* that might even make James Bond give up and go home), the filmmakers were also keen to show off Cruise's lung capacity in a tense underwater scene that contains no cuts.

"We hired a free-diving expert from Hawaii and he worked with Tom," says Burk. "I can hold my breath underwater maybe 30 seconds to a minute on a good day, and Tom was holding it at least five minutes!"

"It eventually got up to six minutes," confirms Granger. "We wanted to shoot the sequence so you can see Tom Cruise underwater for a *rather uncomfortable* amount of time..."

However, not all of the action fell on his shoulders. "Rebecca Ferguson does all her own stunts as well," explains Burk, of the Swedishborn actress who plays the mysterious assassin Ilsa (named after Ingrid Bergman's character in *Casablanca* – a location actually used in the film). "She was someone who, when we started, was genuinely afraid of heights. By the end, she was on fire! It was unbelievable to watch her transition. I can't think of anything that she didn't step up and do herself."

Don agrees, adding: "There's that famous line about Ginger Rogers: 'She had to do everything Fred Astaire did, but backwards



and in high heels.' Rebecca was hired to play Ilsa because of her skill as an actress, and we were thrilled to find out was that she is a professional dancer – she teaches – so there was a basic level of balance and athleticism already for her. And she immediately started weapons and fight training. Needless to say, she didn't go to the extremes that we asked Tom to do, with his decades of training! But everything you see her do in the movie, she did."

And what of Simon Pegg, who waves the flag for Britain in the *Mission: Impossible* films? Will he get a larger role this time out?

"First of all, you should know that that is a fake accent – he's from Encino, California," Burk jokes. "Actually, he has the biggest role he's had in the three films; you see a really wide range of him. He's not only hysterical in the movie, he also has a lot of dramatic turns."

### SPY VS SPY

Rogue Nation contains all the ingredients you'd expect from a Mission: Impossible film, with our beleaguered heroes trying to defend themselves from yet another sinister foe. The main villain is a fond throwback to the original series: a shadowy organisation known as the Syndicate, who are equal in size and power to the IMF and are determined to take them

down. Burk isn't willing to divulge any secrets about their role in the plot, but he does say the television show has been homaged. "Chris McQuarrie is a huge fan of the original series, and when he started developing the script, it was with a mind to have the sort of plot intricacy of the original series. He used the Syndicate as inspiration."

Given that there's been a resurgence of spy movies this year – including *Kingsman*, *Spy*, *The Man From UNCLE* and *SPECTRE* – what will make *Rogue Nation* stand out?

"They're completely different movies; I think there's enough room for you to get your fill and see all of them," says Burk.

"Unlike Bourne or Bond, *Mission* has always been about teams," muses Granger. "A team of operatives who work together to build these amazing mouse-traps of plot. What we have, I believe, is the perfect mixture of everything that makes an *M:I* movie great. Wonderful intrigue, a story that's unexpected, twists and turns, great characters... and some of the most amazing stunts that we've managed to pull off."

Which means there's only one question left to ask: how are they going to top Tom Cruise on that plane in the next film? Gulp...

Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation opens on Thursday 30 July.



# Ian McDonald

How *Dallas* helped inspire the Northern Ireland-based writer's new novel...

• WORDS BY JONATHAN WRIGHT • PORTRAIT BY JESSE WILD

he power of bad television to inspire good ideas sounds like an idea for a PhD thesis. In which case, we humbly suggest that any budding doctoral candidates speak with Ian McDonald about a soap reboot that's lately been airing on Channel 5. It was while watching *Dallas*, he says, that he came up with the idea for his new novel, *Luna*, due in September.

"All the best ideas are collisions," he says, "car crashes of the diverse. The idea of a new take on the dynastic drama piled headlong into something Gary Wolfe said on the *Coode Street* podcast about old tropes made new and how he would welcome a new take on the Moonbase story. I've always loved Moon stories and lo, a book, books, were born."

The novel (the first in a sequence) tells of a "dynastic war between five family corporations". But this isn't simply a case of warring oil

barons being transposed to our satellite. The "unique constraints" of life away from Earth play a key role. "After a couple of years [on the Moon] your muscular-skeletal system will have atrophied – adapted, I suppose – to a degree where a return to Earth gravity will kill you," explains McDonald. "So everyone has to choose: 'Do I

stay or do I go?' And if you stay, there is no way back. It's a

great constraint for what is, in some ways, a Mafia movie."

Mobsters on the Moon indeed. So what's the plot
based around? "Intrigue, rivalry, love and betrayal," says
McDonald, "family and loyalty, sex and violence, and
money. Parents and children and power – and the loss of
power. Bossa-nova, Olympic handball, knife-fighting and
a possibly unique use for a Hugo-award style rocket. Nude

Economics too. More specifically, on McDonald's future Moon, criminal law and civil law don't exist. There's "only contract law so everything is negotiated personally".

What drew McDonald to this notion? "It's a couple of things," he says. "One is that SF, particularly in the US, is either economically liberal and socially conservative, or economically conservative and socially liberal. I wanted to play with a society that is both economically (neo)liberal and socially liberal.

cake-baking. The usual stuff..."

"Family and loyalty, sex and violence, nude cake-baking. The usual stuff..."

"The second is that I wanted to play with Margaret Thatcher's notorious adage, 'There is no such thing as society, there are only individuals and families.' 'Okay,' says my sci-fi sense, 'Let's see what happens when we build a world around that...' So it's a social satire, in a sense, though it seems these days that unless a book has the words 'SATIRE ALERT' watermarked on every page, many readers think it's the literal expression of your thoughts and values..."

Whatever readers might think McDonald means, one thing they're sure to notice is the change in setting. In his last three novels for adults – *River Of Gods, Brasyl* and *The Dervish House*, set respectively in India, Brazil and Turkey, he's explored the developing world. When *SFX* suggests the change in locale was to avoid painting himself into a corner, he concurs. "I didn't want to get trapped into Developing Economy Bingo – tick, Malaysia; tick, Nigeria – and to be honest, I think those stories are better told by other people."

McDonald is talking about writers from outside the English-speaking and European worlds who have begun to break through. Does he think his novels helped open up a space for these writers? "I'd be honoured if that were the case," he says. "I see those books as a consciousness-raising exercise in some ways, and also my own riposte to the then-unspoken biases in SF."

In what's been a busy year, McDonald has also been revisiting his own past. In addition to a "best-of" short story collection, the indie imprint PS is this summer publishing a volume of his Mars stories and a novella, *The Locomotives' Graveyard*, also set on the Red Planet. These are tales that take place in the same eerie, post-cyberpunk, magic realism-tinged fictional universe as *Desolation Road* (1988).

So what does the older McDonald think of his debut? It's still being translated and discovered by new readers, he says, adding, "I couldn't write that book now, which leaves me with the dismal prospect that I wrote my best stuff at the start of my career and it's been a slow slide into mediocrity ever since."

Is there a sense that maybe you do stuff that's less shaped by genre and writing craft constraints when you're younger? "It's possible," he says, adding that he "knew nothing, Jon Snow" back then and had to rewrite *Desolation Road* extensively.

Nonetheless, he cautions against getting too hung up on the advice of so-called experts. While there's craft to be learned, he says, "trying

to hit all the beat points and plot turns and emotional journeys" can strip out "life" and "emotional force". And this, incidentally, comes from a man whose successful career in TV (now behind him) included bringing the Muppets to Northern Ireland for *Sesame Workshop*, so he doubly knows of what he speaks.

"If you follow any screenwriting forums – don't! – the didacticism and ideology are almost theological in their passion and fervour," he says, "particularly as most movies are shit anyway." Better to learn about "structure and story", he advises, "then make it work for you".

LAN MEDONALD

Luna will be published by Gollancz in September.

CIODATA

FROM: Belfast

• GREATEST HITS:

Both River Of Gods

RANDOM FACT:

career wasn't all

Muppets and glory: "If you know my

book Brasyl, all those

terrible [TV] shows

Marcelina pitches?

I've pitched them ... "

McDonald's television

(2004) and The Dervish House (2010) took the

**OCCUPATION:** Novelist

**BORN:** 1960, Manchester



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THE *Trek* spin-off turns 20 this year. Luke dormehl takes a trip back to the delta quadrant



his year marks two decades since the fourth *Trek* show warped onto TV screens around the world. Ultimately running for seven years and 172 episodes, *Star Trek: Voyager* introduced a fresh cast of characters aboard an all-new starship.

"I can't believe it's been 20 years," says actress Kate Mulgrew, who played *Voyager*'s Captain Kathryn Janeway. "It was such a big part of my life. It was a big part of all our lives."

Voyager had its origins in the early 1990s. Star Trek: The Next Generation was winding down as a TV series and while plans called for the crew of the Enterprise-D to continue life on the big screen, television executives wanted a second Trek to accompany recently launched spin-off Deep Space Nine.

Much like the well-received *DS9*, *Voyager* appeared on paper to be a very different beast to the *Treks* created under the watch of Gene Roddenberry, the franchise's creator, who had passed away in 1991. Unlike the original *Star Trek* and *The Next Generation*, *Voyager* wasn't set on an Enterprise-sized starship, but rather a smaller 130-person Intrepid-class vessel.

In a twist which took a note from the *Lost In Space* playbook (ironically a show often considered a rival of the original *Star Trek*), *Voyager* also hurled its unwitting crew to the far reaches of the galaxy. Working titles for the series included *Outer Bounds* and *Galaxy's End.* The pilot episode saw an energy wave hit

Voyager as it pursued a ship of Maquis rebels through the galactic Badlands, pulling it to the unexplored Delta quadrant. At maximum warp speed, it would take the crew of Voyager 75 years to reach home again...

### **DIFFERENT SET-UP**

This premise sought to create a sense of urgency and peril that went beyond *Star Trek*'s traditional mission to seek out new lifeforms. It also established an intriguing dynamic: with Voyager stranded light years from home, it was necessary for Starfleet's officers to form an alliance with the Maquis, several of whom became prominent members of the Voyager crew. In contrast to the eternal professionalism of the Enterprise ships, Voyager was staffed by the likes of hotheaded (by Starfleet standards) Tom Paris, half-human, half-Klingon chief engineer B'Elanna Torres, rookie Harry Kim and assorted others

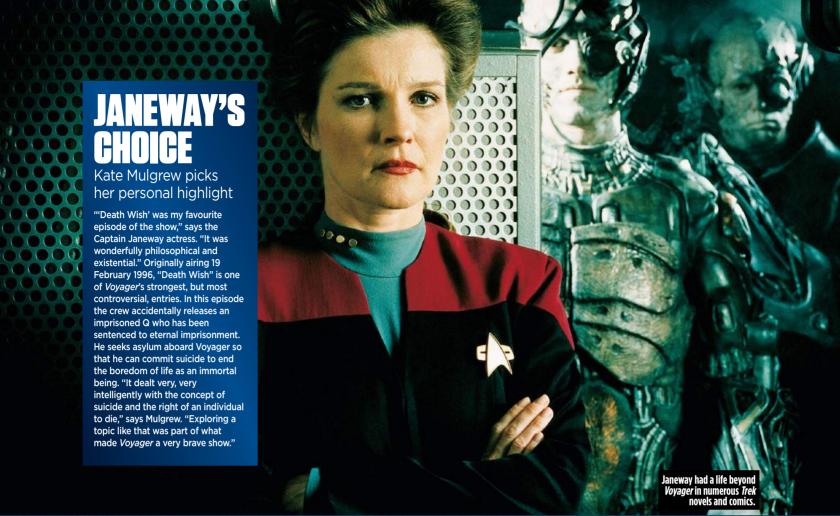
The Borg made frequent appearances in Voyager.

who surely would have been weeded out under normal circumstances. In some ways, Voyager played less like Star Trek and more like The Breakfast Club.

But the most headline-grabbing difference between *Voyager* and the *Treks* that had preceded it was the presence of Captain Janeway, the first major female Starfleet captain in *Star Trek* history. She wasn't the first ever woman we'd seen commanding a starship – an unnamed female captain briefly appears in 1986's *Star Trek IV*: *The Voyage Home* – but she was the first to be given a name and character.

Janeway was played by Kate Mulgrew, a veteran TV actress currently appearing in the Netflix series *Orange Is The New Black*. "It's always remarkable to be the first of anything," she tells *SFX*. "To be the first female *Star Trek* captain was both exciting and humbling. I realised that this was a rare opportunity in my life that would never come again." ❖





# "VOYAGER ARGUABLY SIGNALLED THE END TO CLASSIC STAR TREK, AND CEMENTED THE NEED FOR THE FRANCHISE TO REINVENT ITSELF"

Mulgrew was 39 years old when she was first approached about the role. It was a tumultuous time in her life as she was just in the process of going through a divorce from her first husband. The distraction meant that her first audition was subpar, and led to Geneviève Bujold initially being hired to play Janeway — only to quit after two days of shooting for reasons never fully explained. Mulgrew was selected as the replacement. At her suggestion, Captain Janeway's first name was changed from Nicole to the stronger-sounding Kathryn.

Mulgrew may not have been a fan of *Star Trek*, but she was intrigued by the character of Janeway. "I deeply cared about her," Mulgrew says. "I tried to make her as multidimensional as possible. As a person she was both incredibly lonely and fully alive. The character fascinated me."

At first Mulgrew struggled with the

techno-babble that permeated every episode of *Voyager*. "It was harrowing," she recalls. "For the first season, it was just the most terrifying thing you can imagine. So much of it I didn't understand, and I didn't have time to understand. To understand something you have to read about it and digest it. But when I spoke the lines they had to come out fluently. It was murder."

The consummate professional, Mulgrew quickly decided that she needed to delve more deeply into the world she was inhabiting. Despite the pressures of balancing demanding 16-hour workdays with a young family, she spent her free time reading up on science and *Star Trek* lore.

When she did, a strange thing happened: she discovered that she liked it.

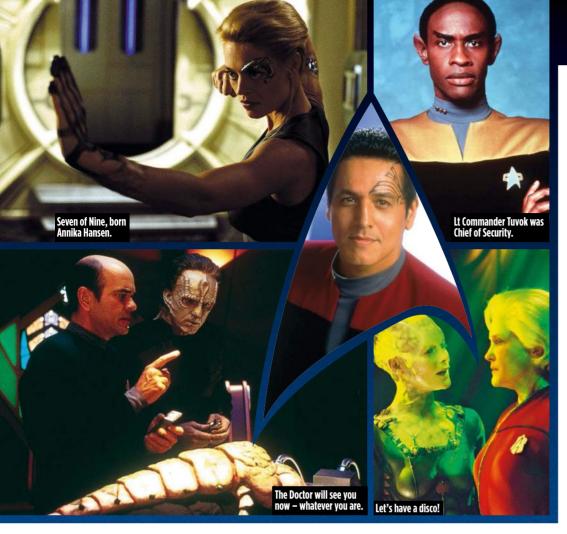
"I had no idea just how captivated I would be with science and particularly with physics," Mulgrew says. "It was something I found as beautiful as anything I'd ever come across in my life. I also became totally swept away by the entire science fiction canon. It was at that point that I began to truly appreciate the world of *Star Trek* and how far-reaching and extraordinary it was."

On-screen, Janeway's character arc was Mulgrew's experience in reverse. "Janeway was scientific to a fault," she explains. "It was her great strength, but also her weakness. She could be lacking in imagination. That's why she spent so much time on the holodeck with [a simulation of] Leonardo da Vinci, who becomes something of a mentor to her. That was an idea I pitched to [executive producer] Rick Berman, which he liked enough to run with. It was meant as a way for her to acknowledge her own deficiencies. She needed to open up her heart and her mind to achieve a greater way of seeing."

### **NEW WOMAN**

As a female *Star Trek* captain, Mulgrew garnered a lot of attention. Following the show's first season she recalls being invited to the White House to talk about the importance of helping women enter STEM fields. Despite *Star Trek*'s overwhelmingly male fanbase, Janeway won plaudits with that audience, too.

"There was a great deal of discussion about whether Janeway should have a relationship during *Voyager*," Mulgrew says. "I thought about that question a great deal, but I nixed the whole thing. I knew that – particularly if I



wanted to win over the young male demographic – I had to appeal to them as a commander first and foremost, and as a sexual woman a very distant second."

As with Star Trek: TNG, Voyager hit its stride midway into its run. A common early criticism among fans is that the series rushed to smooth out the rough edges of its crew; bringing both Maquis rebels and Starfleet officials under one banner to make them a happy Federation family. Later Voyager learned from these mistakes by building around the more intriguing characters who didn't fit so easily into Starfleet-approved boxes. From season three onwards, Robert Picardo's holographic Doctor took his rightful place as a prominent cast member. With his abrasive wit and constant questioning of what it meant to be human (one compelling storyline dealt with his response to finding out that his mind had been wiped by the Voyager crew as if he was a faulty piece of machinery) the Doctor was an intriguing cross between Hugh Laurie's Dr House and The Next Generation's Data.

Another fan-favourite character who came to dominate the show was Seven of Nine, a female former Borg drone whose presence on the show allowed the writers to up the sex appeal content without compromising Janeway's authority as captain. The Borg's arrival on *Voyager* was no great surprise given the success of the then-current movie *Star Trek: First Contact*, but Seven's status as the first Borg to be assimilated into a Starfleet crew added a new twist.

By the time *Voyager* drew to a close with the 2001 episode "Endgame" (SPOILER: The crew returns home), it signalled not just the end of the show, but to a key phase in *Star Trek* history. The 1990s was swamped with three different overlapping *Star Trek* shows, as well as four movies. *Voyager* arguably signalled the end to classic *Trek*, and cemented the need for the franchise to reinvent itself. When *Trek* did reappear on screens with the series *Enterprise* and the JJ Abrams movies it was now a prequel to itself, free of many of the constraints of the show's intricately-woven universe.

"I'm immensely proud of what we achieved with *Voyager*," Kate Mulgrew concludes. "We had seven wonderful years making it. Speaking personally, I'm very happy looking back at it. When it comes to Captain Janeway, I'd argue that not only did she survive, but she thrived. She proved it was her rightful place on that ship, commanding that crew. It was a real privilege."





Looking to dive into Voyager? You've come to the right place...



### **SCORPION PARTS 1 & 2**

(Season 3, Ep 26; Season 4, Ep 1)
A mid-show reset point, this two-parter sees the Voyager crew confront the Borg — and team up with them?



### **YEAR OF HELL PARTS 1 & 2**

(Season 4, Eps 8 and 9)

Voyager encounters an alien with a weapon that can erase anything from history. After a terrible defeat, Janeway rebuilds her forces over an entire year.



### LATENT IMAGE

(Season 5, Ep 11)

Never intended to be a full-time member of Voyager, the Doctor discovers that a portion of his memory has been wiped by the crew he works with every day.



### **EQUINOX** PARTS 1 & 2

(Season 5, Ep 26; Season 6, Ep 1) Voyager discovers another Federation starship stranded in the Delta quadrant — only one that has failed to live up to the moral standards of Janeway and crew.

# PENNY DREADFUL

What's happening in the world of horror movies this month...



I'm having a cynical month. Blame Jurassic World for being too mean, The Human Centipede for failing to shock, and all the Megathis and Saurus-that cash-ins that will not abate. Talking of, um,

bait, sharks are going to be the next BIG thing. And if you think that's good news, be careful what you wish for. The last thing we need is a "bigger boat..."

"People said 'Now we want a "I know someone who thought *The Human* huge human centipede!"". And hey presto! We're in Texas with Dieter Laser bellowing insanely, Bree Olson tottering annoyingly and Laurence Harvey failing at an American accent. It's exuberant. it's "XXL"! (which is what Six is after), but it's not shocking, even though Six desperately wants to recreate the furore which turned the concept into a cultural meme. No, it turns out you're working with diminishing returns when it

### WORLD OF PAIN

people's bottoms.

comes to sewing people to other

And so it is we are in a place where Jurassic World is far more harrowing than The Human Centipede III and yet I'd give HC3 a higher star rating. I'm referring

specifically to the sequence in JWwhere apparent career whore and evil perversion of motherhood Zara (Katie McGrath), who's done nothing worse than answer her mobile a couple of times, is horribly tortured on screen by different dinos in a sequence which reminded me more than anything of that incredibly disturbing true-life footage of a killer whale repeatedly dragging its trainer underwater and almost drowning him in orca doc Blackfish. Zara is Claire's (Bryce Dallas Howard) PA, and neither she, nor the two horrible little brats who watch Zara get tortured and killed, ever mention it again.

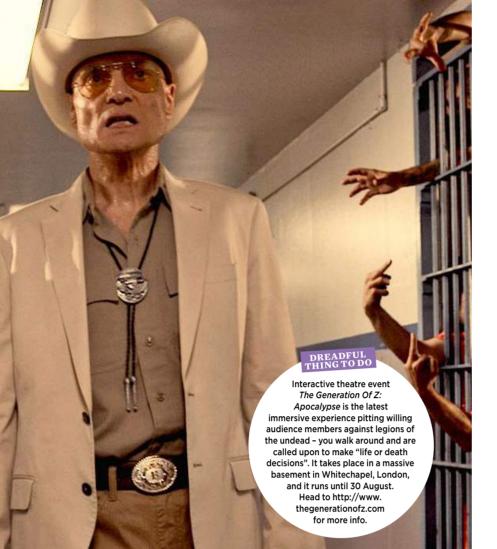
### TWO TO WATCH

Perhaps Lake Placid Vs Anaconda (straight to DVD on 7 September) will turn out to be a stone cold masterpiece? Maybe KillerSaurus (straight to DVD, out now) will be the true spiritual sequel to Jurassic Park that we deserve? As ever, the numbers are stacked against us when it comes to the sheer volume of horror releases, but two for your preorder radar are The Falling (out 24 August) and The Canal (out 14 September). The Falling is set in a British girls' school in the '60s where, after the death of a star pupil, a fainting epidemic begins. Strange and atmospheric, with Game Of Thrones' Maisie Williams in the lead, it's intoxicating and ambiguous like Picnic At Hanging Rock, and steeped in sex. Then The Canal, which also trades on atmosphere, as a film archivist becomes obsessed with a century-



PEDE OFF

Centipede and A Serbian Film were good and even they thought Human Centipede III was terrible!" This warning from a friend of mine, who clearly doesn't realise that I too think First Sequence and A Serbian Film are four-star movies. Low and behold, I didn't hate HC3. It's a fitting finale to a series of films which are nothing but concept over substance. The first was inspired by Tom Six's assertion that paedophiles should have their mouth sewn onto the anus of "a fat truck driver" (what Six has against truck drivers, I don't know). The second film came about because the press kept asking "What if some maniac copies your idea?" and the third?



old murder. An Irish haunted houser with J-horror sensibilities, it may not be wildly original but it makes up for it with tension and chills. Or there's always Volcanosaur (out 24 August)...

### FIVE OF THE FEST

FrightFest is coming - the full slate (76 films!) has now been announced for the annual horror bacchanal. This year, there are five screens, 18 countries represented and 26 UK premieres over the August bank holiday weekend in London's Leicester Square. The 16th FrightFest will be celebrating its grassroots with a renewed focus on indies - good stuff! Of course, I haven't yet seen these films, but with a mixture of insight, instinct, guess work, Google work and a bit of old chat with the FrightFest boys, here are my five (spurious) picks. 1) The Hallow - effective monster movie which made a big splash at Sundance. 2) Aaaaaaaah! completely nuts horror entirely in a made-up language featuring pedigree Brit cast. 3) Nina Forever - existentialist sexual zombie movie about a human/zombie threesome. Because why not?

4) Scherzo Diabolico - Mexican strangeness from the guy who made impressive werewolf movie Late Phases, Adrian Garcia Bogliano. 5) Inner Demon - feral serial killer shocker which makes the list because, like my favourite of last year, The Babadook, it's from an Australian female firsttime director.

### **MEGA SHARK VS OTHER MEGA SHARK**

Two fishy frighteners are Two fisny frighteners threatening to go gill to gill. Eli Roth has signed on to direct Meg for Warner Bros, a film about a 60-foot megladon, while Jaume Collet-Serra, who made Orphan and the House Of Wax remake, is threatening to make In The Deep for Sony. In The Deep, or Open Water: Buoys Against Girls as I will be calling it, is about a surfer who gets stranded on a buoy because a massive Great White won't leave her be. Looks like sharks could be the new dinosaurs. I'm as upset as you are about this, but someone's got to call it. I wouldn't be surprised if

they rebooted Jaws.

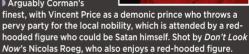




Penny's monthly dictionary of doom

## R IS FOR... ROGER CORMAN

Roger Corman, 1964 Arguably Corman's



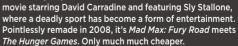
Roger Corman, 1960 Did he really make a bet

that he could shoot a feature film in less than three days? Whatever, this black horror-com about a man-eating plant (later turned into a stage musical and remade by Frank Oz) was a fine example of Corman's resourcefulness.



Paul Bartel, 1975 Me-too cash in of

Rollerball, which arguably turned out better. It's an anarchic dystopian road



# The Hunger Games. Only much much cheaper.

### Joe Dante, 1978

Actually rather wonderful eco-horror produced by Corman but directed by Joe Dante, who'd go on to make Gremlins. Corman

was the king of monster

schlock and the forefather of the ridiculous title (Attack Of The Crab Monsters is quite fun too) but he was also genius at fostering talent (James Cameron made his debut with Piranha 2).







P R E S E N T

# THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION



bit.ly/80s-movies-celebration



The best reviews section in the universe

# THIS ISSUE Did it go wrong without Wright?

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# Highlights



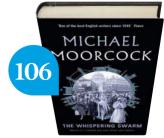
### Inside Out

If you ever read *The Beezer*, the highconcept of the latest Pixar animation will probably ring a few bells...



### Insurgent

Shailene Woodley takes on a system that keeps everyone in their place in the second instalment of the *Divergent* series.



### The Whispering Swarm

Michael Moorcock mixes fantasy and fiction in this book which centres on a young writer called... Michael Moorcock.

# Rated

# Terminator Genisys

Kyle be back

### \*\*\*

### Release Date: OUT NOW!

12A | 126 minutes Director: Alan Taylor Cast: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Emilia Clarke, Jason Clarke Jai Courtney, JK Simmons, Mart Smith

### "TIME TRAVEL MAKES MY

head hurt," yells Kyle Reese, midway through the mind-bending Terminator Genisys. He won't be the only one. With an alternate timeline wiping out most of what you know about Skynet, Sarah Connor and those deadly Terminators, this fifth instalment is easily the most head-scratching of a franchise already built on Möbius-strip logic. But, with the welcome return of Arnold Schwarzenegger, this Alan Taylor-directed effort is a vast improvement on 2009's Terminator Salvation and 2003's Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines.

We begin with Reese (Jai Courtney) recapping: how defence program Skynet went sentient, how Judgement Day came in 1997, how the machines took over, how the humans fought back. The year is now 2029, and trusty lieutenant Reese volunteers to time travel back to 1984 to protect the future mother of John Connor (Jason Clarke), leader of the resistance, after Skynet sends a T-800 Terminator (Arnold

Easily the most head-scratching of the franchise

Schwarzenegger, de-wrinkled thanks to digital trickery) back to kill her.

So far, so James Cameron – but that's where the similarities to the 1984 classic end. When Reese arrives back in the mid-'80s (naked, of course), things ain't how you remember them. For starters, John Connor's mother Sarah (Emilia Clarke) is well aware of the Terminators, unlike Linda Hamilton's Sarah in the original. She even has her own ageing T-800 (Arnie, again) – or "Pops" as she calls him – to protect her. Turns out he was sent back to 1973, when she was nine, to look after her, staying with her ever since.

While Sarah and Arnie's T-800 despatch the younger Terminator that's come back through time, there's another problem: a shape-shifting T-1000 (*I Saw The Devil*'s Byung-hun Lee, who's excellent), even dressed as a cop to remind us of Robert Patrick's liquid-metal Terminator in Cameron's 1991 barometer-setting *T2*. As the trio fight off the T-1000, the first third is relentless, playing out on freeways and in cop shops, shopping malls and abandoned factories.

But then the plot really thickens. The twist – or one of them – is that *Genisys* is really Kyle Reese's story. This time, the protector of Sarah Connor – who is sent back in time by her son John to ultimately father him – is having flashbacks to a sundappled past he never knew. In this timeline, Judgement Day never happened. But Genisys will. "The ultimate killer app", it's a Skynetsponsored Trojan Horse, set to

launch in 2017, to link all our gadgets and leave users vulnerable to attack.

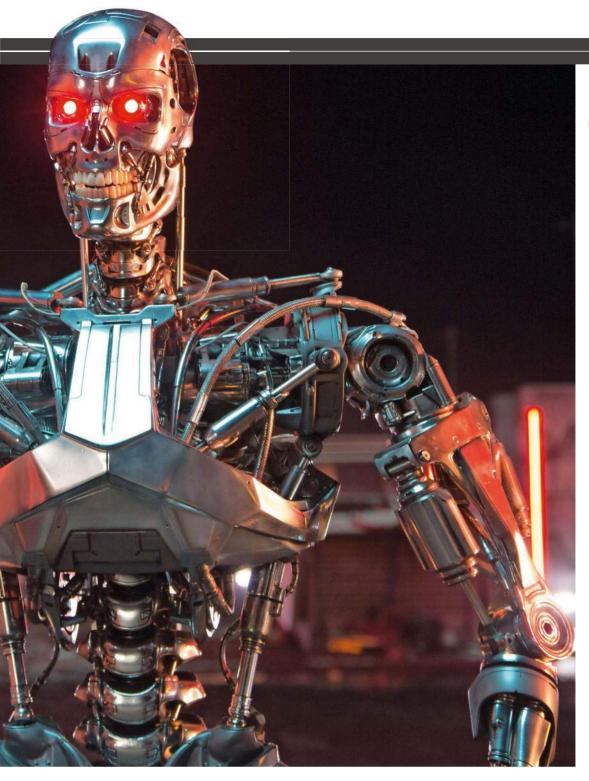
Yet this doesn't even begin to cover a plot so dense, even the trailer succumbs to spoilers – hinted at early on when Matt Smith's mystery man pops up to attack Jason Clarke's John Connor as Reese is sent back to 1984. Thank heavens then for JK Simmons's detective, who brings some much-needed humour to the "really, really complicated" story. Told, in summary, that Reese and co are here to save the world, he quips: "I can work with that."

What doesn't work quite as well is the Arnie humour, not least a

tiresome running gag where he tries to "blend in" by smiling. The obligatory "I'll be back" line is casually used and dismissed, though this model prefers "bite me" as a signature phrase. Better are the references to his ageing appearance; explained with the idea that a Terminator's flesh ages just like a human's, it gives this T-800 (and the actor behind him) a creaky look. "I'm old," he says. "Not obsolete."

Schwarzenegger's return is vital, of course, after he was all-butmissing in *Terminator Salvation*, and his relationship with Sarah does provide some emotional heft. Emilia





Clarke is excellent: action-adept and able to convey her attachment towards her "Pops" amid the constant rush of plot. Courtney, too, is a worthy successor to Michael Biehn from the original (a nice touch has him dress up in the same trenchcoat and Nikes when he first arrives back in 1984).

Indeed, there are numerous points when the script by Patrick Lussier and Laeta Kalogridis feels like a *Terminator* Greatest Hits, as if the earlier movies have criss-crossed together like the plot's overlapping timelines. Is it smart meta-writing? Or simply ripping off the originals? Arguably it's both. But at least the script attempts something

brave; in a franchise where the time travel element has always been a Class A head-fuck, this is the biggest of them all.

Thankfully, Alan Taylor – as he did in *Thor: The Dark World* – proves capable of keeping this ten-ton juggernaut of an action movie running at full pelt. Whether it's Arnie windscreen-smashing, a schoolbus somersaulting or the Golden Gate Bridge blowing, the absorbing visuals ensure it's almost impossible to question the timeline shenanigans mid-flow. The 3D is also unobtrusive, though hardly the film's strongest selling point.

Sadly, the further in you get the more *Genisys* ties itself up in narrative knots with a story that, at times, leaves you yearning for the simplicity of Cameron's original. The ending, in particular, has one WTF moment that lacks credibility, even in this logic-defying loopy universe. Just because time travel means you can go anywhere, it doesn't mean you can do anything. But by then, you'll have most likely given in and just accepted this as the barmiest *Terminator* yet. **James Mottram** 

The unw in the

The costume designer had trouble finding unworn versions of Reese's '80s trainers; in the end Nike specially made 25 pairs.



Jason Clarke
John Connor in
Terminator Genisys



### What appealed to you about the script?

It was putting John's character at the heart of what Judgement Day is. And John being the person that's supposed to save the world vs the problem that could destroy the world. I found that very interesting. That was one of the smartest and best reasons for going back to this franchise: you explore good science fiction themes.

### Did you try to incorporate any of the traits of the previous John Connors into your version?

I watched and loved Eddie Furlong in the second one. I felt it was important that you see that child that Eddie did so well - that irreverent, smart, savvy little kid. That as John becomes or enters the machine, and does his deal with the devil, this freedom for the child should come back. You've seen this warrior; this warlord; this remote, distant guy; and he's set free at a certain point now he accepts certain things. I did try to put that in.

### How was working with Arnie?

We had a lot of funny moments with Arnold, just sitting in his trailer. I mean, I don't smoke cigars, but I had one with Arnold, because how can you not? [Arnold voice] "Have a stogie?" "Okay, yeah." Pulled a chair up in the New Orleans night – because we shot a lot of nights – and had a stogie. It was fucking hilarious. Richard Jordan

ETTY (1)





# **Ant-Man**

Honey, I Shrunk The Superhero

### \*\*\*\*

### Release Date: OUT NOW! 12A | 117 minutes

Cast: Paul Rudd, Michael Douglas, Evangeline Lilly, Corey Stoll, Michael Peña, Judy Greer. Bobby Cannavale

### **ANT-MAN STARTS WITH**

our hero seeming hopelessly outmatched in a prison brawl with a mountain-sized convict. It's an opening that foreshadows the challenges he'll face when he's insect-sized, dodging stamping feet and monster rats. But it also acknowledges Ant-Man's underdog status as the most preposterous Marvel film hero yet; a shrinking superhero leading a loyal ant army, who must appeal to fans of Iron Man and Black Widow. And yet he triumphs, borne on wit and wonder. One minute we're laughing at his ludicrousness, the next he's dazzling us with a rollercoaster ride through a drain on a raft of ants, or hurling toy trains and building blocks with Hulk-scaled gusto.

Like the Guardians of the Galaxy, Ant-Man is unknown outside comic fandom, but his history - a bit involved for a summer blockbuster is laid out excellently. We start with ex-con Scott Lang (Paul Rudd) being released from San Quentin, where he's done time for a series of brilliant burglaries. Scott wants to go straight, but he's unemployable; he also faces losing contact with his daughter from a former marriage. Tempted back to crime, Scott burgles a billionaire's house, finding nothing but a strange body suit. When Lang puts it on, he has his first terrifying experience of shrinking and learns he's drawn the interest of the suit's owner. Hank Pvm (Michael Douglas). Pvm once went under the name of Ant-Man, and is now seeking a successor...

Ant-Man was introduced in a 1962 issue of Tales To Astonish. The film was developed for eight years by Edgar Wright, who was due to direct before his much-publicised departure last year. He's still credited as co-writer, while the new director is Pevton Reed, known for comedies like The Break Up and Bring it On. Heaven knows what Wright's version would have been like; maybe there'll be a documentary about it one day. But Reed does a magnificent job of channelling Wright's humour and sensibility. The tone's breezy, the dialogue zings, and any fears that Marvel has straitjacketed Ant-Man vanish about the time that one chap gets turned into a blob of jam and flushed down the loo.

Comedy actor Paul Rudd follows likeably in the everybloke footsteps of Chris Pratt in Guardians Of The Galaxy. Unlike Peter Quill, though, Rudd's Scott is unused to the wonders of the Marvel universe, reacting with amusing incredulity to, say, ants serving him sugar for his coffee. Michael Douglas is great fun as Pym, dry and sardonic, vet sincere in his emotional moments, which are hilariously deflated by Rudd's artless

reactions. Evangeline Lilly is terrific as Pym's estranged daughter Hope, furious at her dad for choosing Scott as his successor. The show-stealer is Michael Peña as Luis, Scott's fast-talking Latino partner in crime; Peña delivers Edgar Wright-ish fast-cut monologues which ramble delightfully from the point. The weak link is a one-note baddie, Corey Stoll from *House Of Cards*, as a sociopath developing his own Ant-Man suit. But unlike Avengers: Age Of Ultron, Ant-Man's action and characters are tightly integrated despite the vacuum left by the weak villain.

Some viewers may chafe at Ant-Man's long character set-ups before the action cuts loose, but it really cuts loose. In particular, the climax contains the most deranged ideas of any Marvel film, piling up and up in Gilliamesque style: a fight in a falling suitcase; a Thomas the Tank Engine bit. Maybe the lunacy will be toned down when Ant-Man joins the Avengers, but for now he's the craziest superhero on screen, and also the most fun. Andrew Osmond

Hang around for two end-credits scenes; one promises a new hero; the other gives a foretaste of *Captain America: Civil War*.

# **Inside Out**

Not made by Numskulls

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: 24 July

U | 94 minutes

Directors: Pete Docter, Ronaldo Del Carmen Cast: Amy Poehler, Phyllis Smith, Kaitlyn Dias, Richard Kind, Kyle MacLachlan, Diane Lane

### THE HUMAN BRAIN IS THE MOST

mind-bogglingly complex organ known to man. There may not be any scientifically accurate grey matter in sight but on the evidence of *Inside Out*, the latest tour de force from animation maestros Pixar, no studio has a better understanding of what really makes us tick.

It's the story of the chaotic emotions inside the head of schoolgirl Riley. Each of Riley's five key feelings is personified in the form of Joy, Sadness, Anger, Disgust and Fear, who operate a control panel behind Riley's eyes, rather like classic *Beezer/Beano* strip *The Numskulls*. Joy is the dominant emotion, but when Riley's parents move the family to San Francisco the memories that define Riley's personality start to crumble, sending Joy and Sadness on a dangerous journey through Riley's mind.

In recent years Pixar has suffered from the weight of expectation that their remarkable filmography inspires, which is why perfectly decent fare such as *Brave* and



Monsters University felt (relatively) disappointing. Inside Out is Pixar's best since Toy Story 3 and ranks among their most mature and heartfelt films to date.

Most of the action takes place in Riley's noggin – a beautifully vibrant brainscape where every memory is bottled in a colour-coded sphere, where dreams are the product of a reality-warping film studio and where dark thoughts lurk inside the sinister subconscious. It's visually astonishing, and yet for a film with such a vivid exterior *Inside Out* is not afraid to deal with intricate ideas. There's a powerful message contained within about accepting sadness as a part of growing up and moving on from the memories that define our childhood.

As you'd probably expect, it's wonderfully animated, funny and full of superb vocal performances – particularly Poehler, who channels *Parks And Rec*'s Leslie Knope as the infectiously beguiling Joy; Smith's Sadness, meanwhile, is the perfect comic foil. Younger viewers may have trouble getting their heads round the complex set-up, but *Inside Out* is a gem at any age –

witty, moving and imaginative, Pixar back at their best. **Jordan Farley** 

Scenes from Pixar films such as *Up* play in Riley's memory bubbles. How many can you spot?



# **The Gallows**

Not worth hanging around for

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Directors: Travis Cluff, Chris Lofing

Cast: Cassidy Gifford, Pfeifer Brown, Ryan Shoos, Reese Mishler, Alexis Schneider, Price T Morgan

### DID YOU WATCH THE BLAIR

Witch Project and wish there had been more jumpy, focus-free footage? Did you like Paranormal Activity but hope for an even more annoying, immature character than Micah? Did you see [REC], but want a lot less invention? Then we have the movie for you!

The Gallows has a backstory much more interesting than its actual plot, with writer/directors Cluff and Lofing cooking up a two-minute trailer to try to raise funds, putting it online and ending up in the office of Paranormal Activity producer Jason Blum. He then helped them turn it

into a mini-budget horror that focuses on a new production of a seemingly cursed school play.

We're shown that, 20 years ago, one of the young actors in *The Gallows* was accidentally hanged. Now, drama-obsessed Pfeifer (the cast all use their own first names) is

trying to stage it again. But when knock-about jock Ryan and best pal Reese (in the play because he has a crush on Pfeifer) decide to break in the night before and destroy the set (along with Reese's cheerleader girlfriend Cassidy), they soon learn that the tragic events of the original production have left a terrifying supernatural mark.

At least, "terrifying" is what *The Gallows* is going for. Unfortunately, the push for reality has led to something that makes the shakier moments of *Cloverfield* look like a



### More shots of feet than in a shoe fetishist video

Wes Anderson frame - there are more shots of feet here than in a shoe fetishist video. As for the characters? The minor stabs at building personalities do nothing to help the leads, and it's all rendered pointless anyway when the screaming starts in the darkened hallways. Decisions are taken using typical horror movie dumb logic (what's that scary sound? Best go towards it!) and the sooner directors stop using the Blumhouse standard rumbling undertone to try to ramp up the atmosphere, the better: it's become one huge cliché. Disappointing and often wretched, The Gallows is a production you're more likely to want to go full Statler and Waldorf and mock than enjoy.

Jim Blakey

The directors only revealed the script to the actors piecemeal, so as to keep their reactions more natural.



# **Minions**

Despicable-pre



### Release Date: OUT NOW!

U | 91 minutes

Directors: Pierre Coffin, Kyle Balda Cast: Sandra Bullock, Jon Hamm, Pierre Coffin, Michael Keaton Allison Janney, Geoffrey Rush

### NOT EVERY SIDEKICK

or secondary character deserves a spin-off film. We couldn't imagine, for example, the further adventures of any of the minor creatures in the Ice Age franchise. (Scrat, for all his appeal, is better suited to short films). But Despicable Me's Minions have taken off to such a degree that of course the filmmakers would want to give it a shot. And they're more successful than you might figure.

A funny prologue guides us through a brief history of the pill-shaped little yellow menaces, obsessed with finding the biggest, baddest boss to serve and the disappointment they feel when their clumsiness destroys each one. The



visual gags and slapstick come thick and fast, and it's almost a shame when the movie has to get to the actual plot. That's more of a trifle. about Sandra Bullock's '60s supervillain Scarlet Overkill hiring Kevin, Stuart and Bob (who have left their species' seclusion to find a new employer) to help her steal the Queen's crown, and doesn't ever quite live up to the promise of the opening act, even with game

performances from the actress and Jon Hamm as her devoted husband.

But while Minions can't reach the level of, say, an Inside Out in terms of depth and feeling, it's at least not something that punishes grown-ups escorting the kids to see their favourite nonsense-spewing nuisances. Banana! James White



Look out for Despicable Me's Dr Nefario lurking among those showing off their weapons at Villain Con.

### ALSO OUT

There are six more films released during the lifespan of this issue, none of which screened before we went to press. On release already: SELF/LESS, in which Sir Ben Kingsley transfers his consciousness into Rvan Reynolds. On 30 July Tom Cruise returns for a fifth outing as superspy Ethan Hunt in MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: ROGUE

NATION. We're promised a David Cronenberg-influenced take on the Marvel comic when Chronicle director Josh Trank's **FANTASTIC FOUR** arrives on 6 August. Then on 12 August, aliens attack Earth using Donkey Kong and other classic videogame characters in PIXELS. Finally, 14 August brings Simon Pegg-gets-

powers comedy ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING, and Guy Ritchie's MAN FROM UNCLE movie.



### Ted 2

More bear-faced cheek

### **Release Date: OUT NOW!**

15 | 115 minutes

Cast: Mark Wahlberg, Amanda Seyfried, Giovanni Ribisi, Morgan Freeman, Seth MacFarlane

### AFTER THE WRETCHED

A Million Ways To Die In The West, Seth MacFarlane's back on safer ground with the return of his foul-mouthed talking teddy bear. Of course, the novelty's no longer there, but MacFarlane can still offend with the best of 'em.

The plot revolves around Ted's liberties, after an attempt to adopt a baby leads him to see his civil rights revoked. Joined by old friend John, still nursing a broken heart after divorce. Ted takes the case to court (his lawyer is Amanda Seyfried's pot-smoking law graduate Samantha), loses, and is declared property not person. The three then head to New York to implore Morgan Freeman's slick lawyer to help them appeal the verdict.

As plots go, it's not exactly 12 Angry Men, but Ted 2 is really just an excuse for MacFarlane's puerile



humour to spills its guts on the screen. Wahlberg covered in sperm? Check. Seyfried sucking a penisshaped bong? Check again. Ted watching bear-porn? Oh, yes.

The director's sense of the shocking leaves no taboo unturned - not least when the trio head to an improv comedy night to throw out bad-taste suggestions: 9/11, Bill Cosby and Charlie Hebdo all get referenced. The better jokes are the more random ones - like a sly nod to The Breakfast Club's library dance or Ted's repeated gags that the wide-eyed Seyfried looks like Gollum. Liam Neeson also pops up for a bizarre Taken-like pastiche. You'll laugh, occasionally out loud, but you'll hate yourself in the morning. James Mottram

Both Wahlberg and MacFarlane were meant to fly on a 9/11 plane; Wahlberg changed his plans; MacFarlane just missed boarding.

### **Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder**

Trump Power

### \*\*\*\*

Release Date: 31 July

PG | 85 minutes

Director: Arild Fröhlich

Cast: Eilif Hellum Noraker, Emily Glaister, Kristoffer Joner, Atle Antonsen

### Jo Nesbø's bloody

oeuvre has brought Nordic noir to readers worldwide. Less known, outside Scandinavia at least, is his output as a children's author, a sideline that should get more exposure with the release of this Roald Dahl-like fantasy.

Set in a picturesque hamlet, it tells of two children - sensible Lise and bequiffed urchin Nilly - and their friendship with Doctor Proctor, a reclusive eccentric whose latest invention makes whoever ingests it guff enough to send them airborne. To Lise and Nilly, this brightly-coloured powder is a delightful plaything they can flog to their schoolmates and use to wreak revenge on a pair of bullving twins. But to tycoon Herr Thrane, it's a surefire goldmine he'll stop



at nothing to get.

This could never be accused of being sophisticated. Yet it remains a pleasantly breezy diversion, grotesque enough in places to recall Jean-Pierre Jeunet, with an artfully cluttered aesthetic redolent of Wes Anderson. A poignant flashback to Proctor's lost Parisian love is amusingly staged as a silent film pastiche, and there's a WTF interlude involving a CG serpent alerting kids to the dangers of flushing pets down the toilet.

"You may find what follows a little crude," intones an unseen narrator at the beginning. "But we can't help it if you're a big prude!" You'd have to be a big one indeed to take offence at this affably knockabout yarn. Neil Smith



As a teenager, Jo Nesbø played for top Norwegian football team Molde FK – until he tore the cruciate ligaments in his knee.





# Rated

# Insurgent

**Back in faction** 

\*\*\*

Release Date: 3 August 2015 | 12 | 30 Blu-ray/Blu-ray/DVD Director. Robert Schwenite Cast: Shailene Woodley, Theo James, Kate Winslet, Miles Teller, Naomi Warts, Jai Courtney



THE FIRST

sequel is usually the point where you find out whether a franchise has legs. Series openers are,

almost by definition, cinematic Darwinism in action: the successful will be granted a follow-up, while the flops will be doomed to an eternity of hanging story threads and repeated screenings on some godforsaken digital channel.

The first sequel is different. By the time a property's got that far, it's clear that the studio has enough faith in the saga to bankroll it, yet it's still impossible to know whether there's enough substance to the story to sustain another movie, or two, or three. Even if – as is the case with the *Divergent* series – you're adapting a phenomenally successful trilogy of YA novels.

While *Insurgent* doesn't quite set the world on fire, it does justify the continuation of the saga by doing everything a decent sci-fi sequel should. This is an organic extension

Insurgent doesn't set the world on fire, but it justifies the continuation of the saga of *Divergent* that opens out its world and puts its characters in new situations and jeopardy. It's anything but a retread, and also a big improvement on its promising but distinctly average predecessor, with more confidence, a better story and considerably more brains.

Insurgent picks up exactly where the first movie left off, with heroic Beatrice "Tris" Prior (Shailene Woodley), mentor/boyfriend Four (Theo James), brother Caleb (Ansel Elgort), and duplicitous hanger-on Peter (Miles Teller) on the run from the goons of Big Bad Jeanine (Kate Winslet). Everybody in this futuristic world is still conveniently assigned to a "faction" based on their personality - Abnegation (the Selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Erudite (the intelligent), Amity (the peaceful) or Candor (the honest) though Tris and Four's Divergent status (they exhibit characteristics of all five groups) has turned them into public enemy numbers one and two.

One of the biggest issues with Divergent was the implausibility of the faction system; the idea of a future society finding salvation by separating every personality in existence into one of five types where everyone will share similar hopes and dreams, and even want to pull on the same togs every morning - is arguably an even harder pill to swallow than the one that reveals humanity is living in The Matrix. That problem isn't really solved here. So while there's undoubtedly some appeal in seeing more of author Veronica Roth's world, Tris and Four's stay in Amity feels like a trip to a Witness theme park, while Candor's stylised two-tone colour scheme makes its inhabitants look like members of the world's biggest

Kraftwerk tribute band. This is production/costume design on an overly simplistic level, a clunky metaphor that tries to do the heavy lifting on the emotional subtext, and turns some of the supporting players into cartoons. (Thankfully we don't spend nearly as much time with either faction as we did with the *Starlight Express* Dauntless gang in the first movie – not *quite* enough for them to outstay their welcome.)

Yet hiding behind the faction nonsense, there *is* a compelling tale of rebellion simmering below the surface, a sense that the status quo really does need overthrowing.

Jeanine's obsessive crusade to hunt down every last Divergent - a group she fears because she can't control them - is actually quite convincing. And her obsession with finding someone who can open a box left behind by the city founders. containing secrets of its existence (a clever McGuffin that didn't appear in the book), is the force that drives the narrative. Indeed, it's in the final act - where chosen one Tris is plunged into a series of virtual tests to unlock the cube - that director Robert Schwentke really comes into his own, with the slightly underwhelming action beats of the





"real" world replaced by some genuinely inventive sequences.

As in the first movie, the real star of the show is Shailene Woodley as Tris. The Divergent movies may lack the visceral punch of The Hunger Games (a saga they're destined to spend forever being compared with), yet Woodley makes Tris a much warmer centrepoint for her story than the emotionally distant Katniss Everdeen. She's a hero who doesn't have all the answers, at times naive, at others brave and decisive, with an emotional rawness that grounds the character as she gradually accepts her destiny.

Somewhat implausibly, the

game-changer of a denouement even makes the whole ludicrous notion of factions (almost) make sense. Which bodes well for the future, because as has become the tradition since Harry Potter and The Hunger Games, final novel Allegiant will be split into two parts. Insurgent gets enough right to hint at a lot of potential; if this upward trajectory continues, part four could just be a classic. **Extras:** Divergent universe completists should head for the Blu-ray (available in both 3D and 2D versions), as that's where most of the extras can be found. The biggies are feature-length behind-the-scenes

piece "Insurgent Locked" (111 minutes) and an audio commentary from husband-and-wife producer team Douglas Wick and Lucy Fisher (the big-screen guardians of the saga). You also get five short featurettes (18 minutes) on subjects such as the cast, the train fight sequence and adapting the book, and a "marketing gallery". DVD buyers will have to make do with the commentary, one of the featurettes (five minutes) and the gallery.

**Richard Edwards** 

Woodley and Elgort play brother and sister in the *Divergent* films, but were a boyfriend and girlfriend in *The Fault In Our Stars*.

### **Virtual Insanity**



### **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION**

▶ The holodeck was designed to give the Enterprise-D crew a break from life on their very beige ship - and clearly not as an excuse to put them in Sherwood Forest or '40s America for a bit of a change. Whoever was responsible for health and safety protocols should have been fired.

### **RED DWARF**

In the excellent "Back To Reality" it turned out that everything Rimmer, Lister, Kryten and the Cat had done in the show was part of total immersion videogame Red Dwarf. Unfortunately they weren't very good at living their own lives (score: 4%), so it was something of a relief when they learned it was just a squid-induced hallucination.



### **CAPRICA**

▶ The Battlestar Galactica prequel gave its residents the chance to get away from it all by using holobands to hang out in V-Space. This digital replica of the real world allowed you to live out your wildest fantasies - even if your physical body had passed away. What could possibly go wrong...?

### THE MATRIX

If solving the world's energy problems was as simple as strapping the human race up to a giant power grid, we'd probably have tried it by now - so you can't help thinking the machines that overthrew us made their existence harder than it needed to be by constructing an entire virtual world to keep our minds occupied.



# **Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell**

How to make an audience disappear

EXTRAS \*\*

### Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | Blu-rav/DVD Director: Toby Haynes

Cast: Bertie Carvel, Eddie Marsan, Marc Warren, Charlotte Riley, Alice Englert, Ariyon Bakare



### ALL GEORGIAN

magician Mr Norrell wanted was to make magic respectable to a sceptical England of the early 1800s. All the BBC wanted, it seems,

was to make fantasy respectable to prime-time UK audiences again. In the end, both failed. But they were heroic failures.

The series tanked in the ratings. For connoisseurs of fantasy this seems unfathomable. Here we have a respectable adaptation of Susanna Clarke's celebrated 2004 novel about the rivalry of two magicians, full of whimsy and mystery. It has two perfectly cast leads, some gorgeous special effects, impressive production design, atmospheric direction and endless bizarre wigs. How could it fail?

There are some delightfully quirky lines ("Why are you firing walnuts at me?"). There's a touch of the Grand Guignol. There's an epic sweep that takes in the

madness of King George and the Battle of Waterloo (with a wonderfully sarcastic Wellington). There's just so much to embrace and enjoy.

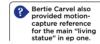
Yet the series makes one great mistake. It preaches to the converted. Unless you've read the book, or are well-versed in the tropes of fantasy, or pay scrupulous attention to every line, it's often an inscrutable, unfathomable experience, Vital plot points are made in passing. Character dynamics aren't always explicit. The pivotal rivalry is sidelined for long periods.

This subtle, low-key approach is rewarding for the kind of people who'll buy this Blu-ray. Fine. But Strange & Norrell was intended to be a big crowd-pleaser, so it's a shame it isn't a little more viewer-friendly. It doesn't need dumbing down, just focusing up. After all, don't you wish more people loved it?

EXTRAS: A Making Of (25 minutes), deleted scenes (11 minutes), bloopers (one minute), two brief effects breakdown montages (two minutes each) and a couple of galleries (stills

and behind-thescenes stuff).

**Dave Golder** 





# **A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night**

So Farsi, so good

★★★★★ EXTRAS★★★★

Release Date: 27 July 2014 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD Director: Ana Lily Amirpou Cast: Sheila Vand, Arash Marandi, Marshall Manesh, Dominic Rains. Mozhan Marno. Rome Shadanloo



WE NEUTERED the vampire, didn't we? We let the undead turn into pale objects of teenage desire or heritage industry

totems, cosy as a snug, early hours watch of a vintage Hammer horror. Their essential dread and oddity became absorbed into the bloodstream of culture. No place now for the primal otherness that wormed through the pages of Bram Stoker's Dracula.

Ana Lily Amirpour's inky but luminous debut restores some welcome potency to the screen

vampire. It's a film imbued with a deep, dislocating sense of The Other: shot in Southern California, set in an Iranian ghost town, told in the Persian language of Farsi, it tilts, spins and fuses genre conventions, scraping away decades of cliché to make the myth feel fresh again.

Take its heroine, the kohl-eyed wraith moving through the ragged chain-link fences and tangible despair of Bad City. She's draped in the traditional garment of the chador, her silhouette recalling the operatic billow of Christopher Lee's cape but also connecting to a very contemporary Western distrust of the outsider. And the film knows the power of her iconography - your eye is always drawn to her, even when

she's out of focus, as hazy as an unspoken fear. In one shot she even looks like a hole in the frame itself.

Amirpour parades her influences. Shots of smoke-belching towers clearly homage David Lynch's eye for industrial beauty. And there's more than a touch of Jim Jarmusch in the off-kilter, deadbeat romance that unfolds alongside the horror.

But this is a new, fearsomely assured voice. Gorgeously photographed, immaculately soundtracked, A Girl Walks Home Alone At Night resurrects the undead while declaring the arrival of a major new genre talent.

**EXTRAS:** A behind-the-scenes documentary, an Amirpour and Vand interview, deleted scenes and a trailer. Plus, the Blu-ray comes complete with a graphic novel adaptation. Nick Setchfield



2 Look closer at the Madonna poster on the wall. For rights reasons the Material Girl actually has the face of Margaret Atwood.



# The Last Ship Season One

America, F\*\*\* Yeah!



Release Date: OUT NOW! 2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Hank Steinberg

Cast: Eric Dane, Rhona Mitra, Adam Baldwin



### **BASED ON THE**

novel by William Brinkley and produced by Michael Bay (which tells you everything you need to know),

The Last Ship's 10-episode first season is the story of the USS Nathan James, a guided missile destroyer that happens to be out at sea when an airborne pandemic kills 80% of the world's population. It's left to square-jawed, all-American commander Tom Chandler and his crew, including sultry scientist Rachel Scott, to find a cure and save the damn planet.

Thought Team America: World Police parodied these kinds of stories out of existence a decade ago? Think again. The Last Ship is eight hours plus of unashamed militaristic jingoism, with the crew possessing one character trait



### **Essentially** Battlestar Galactica at sea

across the board: heroism. In episode two they go to actual Guantanmo Bay and shoot actual Al-Qaeda terrorists in their actual faces, for America (and medical supplies or something).

And yet... we kind of love it. If you squint it's essentially Battlestar Galactica at sea, with entire episodes dedicated to catastrophic engine failures or their desperate need for water after months at sea. A rival Russian vessel pursues them across the ocean and can appear at a moment's notice, like the Cylon fleet, and they occasionally drop anchor and go out on away missions. usually introducing some good old-fashioned American values to an indigenous population.

### DRINKING GAME TENNESSEE WHISKEY EVERY TIME.

Someone salutes the Someone sall.

American flag.

Chandler gives an inspiring speech.

Scott says "primordial strain".

Quincy acts all shifty like.

Someone says "Master Chief" and you picture Halo.

Someone is exposed to the virus.

An irreplaceable crew member puts themselves in mortal danger for no good reason.

Tex hits on Scott.

The Russians turn up out of nowhere.

Something on the ship breaks.

It isn't in the same league as BSG, of course, but with space-based shows an endangered species it's a decent enough time-waster. **EXTRAS:** Four producer commentaries, 10 brief inside-theepisode featurettes, six "Origin Of The Virus" prequel shorts, a Comic-Con panel, two more featurettes, and some EPK stuff. Jordan Farley

# **Metal Hurlant Chronicles**

Tales Of The Expected

\*\*\*\* EXTRAS \*

Release Date: OUT NOW! 2012-2014 | 15 | Blu-rav/DVD/download Director: Guillaume Lubrano



THERE'S ONLY one way to enjoy Metal Hurlant Chronicles. Well, two if you include not watching it. The other is trying

to predict how many minutes into any episode you can guess the twist. Hint: never bet on double figures.

This English-language Franco-Belgian co-production is basically Sci-Fi Twist Greatest Hits. Aside from "...and their names were Adam and Eve" the show boasts all the classics. Would we be giving away spoilers by listing them? Do "twists" that are self-evident count as spoilers? Possibly. Let's just say,

there is a child in one story whose name is - we learn in the last line of the episode - Adolf.

Admittedly, the show has an excuse. It's based on classic science fiction anthology magazine of the '70s and '80s Métal Hurlant, which featured stories and art by such contemporary big-name SF creators as Moebius, Berni Wrightson, Dan O'Bannon and Jean Giraud. It's the

same magazine that inspired the US animated movie Heavy Metal (1981). There are similarities between that film and this series, besides both being anthologies and utter tosh. The stories in the film are linked by an evil artefact called the Loc-Nar; in the series they're linked by the "Métal Hurlant" - the last fragment of a once-living planet, condemned to travel ceaselessly

His Pinhead costume still needed a lot of work.

through space and time, screaming its sadness and despair.

All 12 episodes are adaptations of stories from the magazine, which explains why they feel so overly familiar; all the ideas in them have been used time and time again in films and television shows since then. There's even a story based on an urban myth about Walt Disney that's been thoroughly debunked since.

All of which may have been bearable on a "historical interest" level if the show weren't also so appallingly made. Some big-name sci-fi guest stars try their best, but fight a losing battle against the amateurish direction, cheap effects and clunky dialogue. Watching this show, you'll be the one ceaselessly screaming in sadness and despair.

**EXTRAS:** None. Dave Golder

Although US reprints of the original French mag were called Heavy Metal, "Metal Hurlant" actually translates as "Howling Metal".



# The Adventures Of Buckaroo Banzai

Understanding the plot is brain surgery

\*\*\*\* EXTRAS \*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

1984 | 12 | Blu-ray Director: WD Richter

Cast: Peter Weller, John Lithgow, Ellen Barkin, Jeff Goldblum, Christopher Lloyd, Lewis Smith



### No genre film

is possessed of more swagger, verve and sheer joi de vivre than The Adventures Of Buckaroo Banzai

Across The 8th Dimension!

A glacially cool Peter Weller is the titular renaissance man, who when not conducting brain surgery or breaking the sound barrier in a jet-car sings in a rock 'n' roll band.

It's a film that confidently establishes a richly detailed and distinctive world – a stylish, acid-rinsed riff on '40s matinee serials – populated by likeable characters. The script crackles with quotable one-liners, and John Lithgow's outrageously-accented Dr

Lizardo is one of the big screen's most bracingly barmy bad guys.

Only problem? The plot.
Successful movies can usually be summarised in a line; it feels like a sheet of A4 is required to do justice to Banzai's, which involves two factions of alien "Lectroids" and a dimension that exists in the spaces between matter – even though much of what happens boils down to a run-around for a McGuffin. The script dumps you in at the deep end and leaves you to sink or swim.

For mega-fans like Kevin Smith, this is a laudable approach that places *Banzai* in the arthouse category. Well, maybe. But it looks an awful lot like simple incompetence. **EXTRAS:** A director/writer commentary and a featurette (23 minutes) incorporating vintage promo interviews both (annoyingly) pretend the film's a docu-drama. An alternate opening with home-movie footage of the young Banzai is



interesting but inessential, as are 14 trims from the work print. There are decent new interviews with Weller (who's amusingly pretentious) and Lithgow (31 minutes). But the highlight is a 2011 Q&A with the duo (43 minutes), hosted by Kevin Smith. Plus: an astute "visual essay"

(28 minutes); audio interview with the unit publicist (10 minutes); TV pitch promo video; text-free credits sequence; extensive gallery; trailer; booklet. Ian Berriman



Lithgow's "dialect coach" was actually an Italian tailor in the costume department, whom the actor recorded reciting his lines.

### **Seventh Son**

Spook Central



Neticase Date. 3 August 2015 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD Director: Serge Bodrov Cast: Jeff Bridges, Ben Barnes, Julianne Moore, Alicia Vikander, Kit Harrington



### JUST SIX

months since its theatrical release, Seventh Son already feels like a relic. There's a good reason

for this: the film went in front of cameras in 2012 and sat on the shelf for over a year, which explains why *Game Of Thrones*' Kit Harington has a bafflingly minor role while Ben Barnes has somehow ascended to leading man status again despite being, well, a bit naff.

Master Gregory (Jeff Bridges) is a mumbly monster-hunting Spook who enlists the help of Chosen One Tom Ward (Barnes) to track down big bad witch Mother Malkin (Julianne Moore) and her supernatural assassins. Why Tom? He's the seventh son of a seventh son, which makes him special because, er, reasons.



It's join-the-dots fantasy fluff with a cast of magical archetypes, bland monsters and derivative storytelling, all set in a generic medieval land. It would have been perfectly at home in 2006 sandwiched between *Eragon* and *The Dark Is Rising*, but feels hopelessly old-fashioned in a post-*Thrones* world.

It's nicely shot, and Bridges and Moore are entertainingly hammy, but it's a film that adds nothing to the genre, aiming only to distract for a couple of hours – and it barely manages that.

**EXTRAS:** Making Of (25 minutes); a brief featurette on "seventh son" lore; deleted/alternate scenes; an alternate ending; galleries of effects progressions. **Jordan Farley** 

Joseph Delaney, author of the original book, has a new YA title out: Arena 13, "The Spook's Apprentice meets Gladia

### BLU-RAY DEBUT

### **Zombi Holocaus**1

Spaghetti splatter spruced up

\*\* EXTRAS \*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Director: Marino Girolami Cast: Ian McCulloch, Alexandra Delli Colli, Sherry Buchanan, Peter O'Neal, Donald O'Brien



1980 | 18 | Blu-ray

### IT'S A ZOMBIE

film! It's a cannibal film! It's a mad doctor film! It's... a not very good film.

In a plot familiar to anyone au fait with Lucio Fulci's Zombie Flesh Eaters, a group of New York medical types – including Ian McCulloch, looking and sounding exactly like Pointless's Alexander Armstrong – head to the East Indies to find the source of a cult that's stealing body parts. There they encounter the cannibals and zombies and mad doctor who gave this film the best of its squillions of

Flashes of nudity and gore break the mundanity: a skull is removed in bloody detail, and McCulloch fends off a rotter by pulping his face with a boat's motor. Natives feast on a

aliases: Dr Butcher, Medical Deviate.



man's intestines, then drill their fingers into his eye sockets. Yes, this sounds mighty grim, but most of the gore looks pretty fake, and Zombi Holocaust's main problem is that it ambles. Zombie films shouldn't amble; they should race! EXTRAS: A 2014 convention Q&A with Ian McCulloch (50 minutes) and Eaten Alive!, an hour-and-ahalf-long documentary on the rise and fall of the Italian cannibal film - it's comprehensive, with lots of juicy footage, but watching the interviewees trying to out-PC one another becomes tiresome (why watch these films if they offend you so much?). A trailer and deleted scene round things off; there's also a postcard and a 16-page booklet.

### Russell Lewin



lan McCulloch was told by a production manager on one zombie film that he wouldn't leave Italy alive if he misbehaved!



# Home

Where the heart is?

★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★

### Release Date: OUT NOW! 2015 | U | Blu-ray 3D/Blu-ray/DVD

Director: Tim Inhoson Cast: Jim Parsons, Rihanna, Steve Martin, Jennifer Lopez, Matt Jones, Derek Blakenship



### **BOTH THIS**

DreamWorks animation and its blobby alien hero Oh are initially rather irritating, then

modestly sweet and charming, but you forget them both very quickly. Home feels like a softened version of Lilo & Stitch, as Oh meets a young human girl to form a comic couple, minus the quirks and deeper emotions of the earlier film.

The opening is good, with Oh's people, the Boov, arriving at Earth and blithely levitating the humans to Australia. The girl, called Tip, is left behind, desperately seeking her mum. Because DreamWorks goes for celebrity casts, Tip is voiced by

Rihanna and her mother by Jennifer Lopez. Rihanna doesn't sound much like a teen, but her voice still works for the character. Oh, for his part, is the least popular Boov ever. When his blunder puts his species in peril, he's forced onto the run, hooking up with Tip.

The film is a comedy chase, with an inventive action scene on a flying Eiffel Tower: then diminishing returns set in until a good-hearted final twist. Starting with the amiably average alien designs, Home feels like it's coasting; even Steve Martin as the Boov's tyrannical captain seems subdued. It's certainly no Monsters Vs Aliens.

**EXTRAS:** Tutorials on drawing the characters (38 minutes), preview short "Almost Home", viral clips of the Boov "testing" Earth objects, deleted scenes, music videos, other bits and bobs. Andrew Osmond



In the original book (*The True Meaning Of Smekday* by Adam Rex) the Boov have seven genders.



Scout's horror

\*\*\*\* EXTRAS ★★★★★

Release Date: 3 August 2014 | 15 | DVD Director: Innas Govaerts Cast: Maurice Luijten, Titus De Voogft, Stef Aerts, Evelien Bosmans, Gill Eeckalaert, Jan Hammenecker



### THE SCOUTS'

motto is "be prepared". But when a troop of cub scouts sets out on a summer camping trip, they find themselves

woefully unready for the evil that lurks in the woods

You know something's going to go wrong right from the start, when the cubs are scared away from their usual campsite by tracksuit-wearing thugs. Their alternative base camp is wilder, more isolated, and a popular suicide spot for depressed workers from a nearby factory. With one of their number suffering from mental problems, and both leaders distracted by an attractive blonde cook, the stage is set for a disaster.

Sure enough, one turns up in the form of "Kai", a shadowy figure who's part campfire story, part feral pre-teen, and all ruthless killer.

It takes a while for the violence to begin, but once it does, it's relentless, and far more brutal than you'd expect for a movie about children. Though the gore's mostly implied, the woods are full of imaginative traps that wouldn't seem out of place in a Saw sequel.

Unfortunately, as the carnage winds down, the film chucks in a final twist that's both obvious and kind of nonsensical, making for a disappointing end to what's otherwise an intriguingly creepy mystery. Still, it's a decent enough entry into the campsite slasher canon. EXTRAS: A 13-minute short and music video from the same director: a visual effects breakdown. Sarah Dobbs



The budget to build the movie's elaborate traps came via a crowdfunding campaign entitled "Buy A Trap, Kill A Cub".

### DEAD SHADOWS

Release Date: 27 July 2012 | 18 | DVD/VOD



Director David Cholewa is a huge fan of John Carpenter and it's obvious from his debut feature. In this French-language sci-fi-horror, a shy IT guy with

a fear of the dark (Fabian Wolfrom) must overcome his phobia to survive after a comet causes Paris's population to start turning into murderous mutations; cue tentacled Lovecraftian horrors and sights reminiscent of Rob Bottin's designs for The Thing. Clocking in at under 75 minutes, it's a frenetically paced effort that unrelentingly piles on the gore and effectively generates a doom-laden atmosphere, although some shonky CGI lets the side down, and rather too many questions are left unanswered.

### THE HUMAN CENTIPEDE 3: **FINAL SEQUENCE**

Release Date: OUT NOW! 2015 | 18 | Blu-rav/DVD



Even fans of Tom Six's grossout horror series are likely to be appalled by the third entry, not because of its relentless trolling, but because it's so

boring and incompetently made. The stars of the previous two films play a prison warden and his accountant, who decide to save money by stitching 500 inmates together. But before we finally see that near the end there's a catalogue of atrocities to endure, including castration, rape (male and female) and waterboarding (with boiling water). Six's attempts at 'satire" are witlessly crude, and Dieter Laser's non-stop screaming as the warden is like white noise. Avoid.

### VENOM

Release Date: OUT NOW! 1971 | 15 | DVD



Peter Sykes, director of the Hammer films Demons Of The Mind and To The Devil A Daughter, helmed this bewildering horror, also known

as The Legend Of Spider Forest. Set amongst the mountains of Bavaria, it combines contemporary thriller elements with the legend of a cursed "Spider-Girl": expect some enthusiastic whipping, a little nudity, and an ending which cribs from Psycho. Though it has some atmospheric moments, the various plot elements which include the mystery of the child-like Anna, a series of art thefts and a neo-Nazi plotting to make nerve gas from spider venom - frustratingly never quite come together in a coherent way.

### X-MEN: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST THE ROGUE CUT

Release Date: OUT NOW! 2015 | 12 | Rlu-ray/DVD



We'd love to give you our verdict on this new extended version of the last X-Men film, but unfortunately no advance discs were made

available, and the only screening was on the day of release (13 July) - too late for our deadlines. We can tell you that it includes 11 minutes of Rogue-focused material which originally ended up on the cutting-room floor, reinstating a whole subplot. The new footage sees Magneto and Iceman breaking Rogue out of a Sentinel-controlled prison camp so that she can take over the control of sending Wolverine's mind back in time from an injured Kitty.



### **White God**

Top Dog

\*\*\*\* EXTRAS \*\*

**Release Date: 3 August** 2015 | 15 | DVD Director: Kornél Mundruczó Cast: Zsófia Psotta, Sándor Zsótér, Luke and Body



### THIS

allegorical Hungarian drama scooped the coveted Palme Dog at the 2014 Cannes film festival, and deservedly

so. The canine cast dazzle in this tale of an oppressed pooch who incites a furry revolution on the streets of Budapest.

Hagen is the loveable mixedbreed dog of 15-year-old Lili. After being abandoned on the streets by Lili's tight-fisted father, Hagen transforms from kind-hearted canine into the snarling survivor of the fighting pits, leading a seemingly organised uprising across the city to enact bloody revenge.

Part socially-conscious animal welfare drama, part Cujo, White God mainly plays things powerfully straight. Hagen's brutal fight training is genuinely upsetting stuff.



the reassurance that "no animals were mistreated or harmed while training and filming" more of a relief than ever before. The final act is where the film takes a turn for the fantastical. It's a thrilling about-face, with mass maulings and marches down militarised streets never less than thrillingly convincing.

If there's a downside it's that Lili's parallel story doesn't quite match the emotional highs of Hagen's. It's standard "young girl gets mixed up with the wrong crowd" fare, only really registering when Hagen's on screen. Far from a dog's dinner. White God is real Pedigree Chum. EXTRAS: Interviews with the director and the animal coordinator, plus a behind-the-scenes piece. Jordan Farley



Altogether, 274 dogs were used to make White God, setting a new record for the most dogs used in a feature film.

### Housebound

Home is where the "arghhh!" is

★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★

Release Date: OUT NOW! 2014 | 18 | Blu-rav/DVD Director: Gerard Inhoston Cast: Morgana O'Reilly, Rima Te Wiata, Glen-Paul Waru, Ross Harper, Cameron Rhodes, Ryan Lampp



### **How Long**

would it take you to go nuts if you had to move back home with your parents? What if you couldn't

even go outside the house for eight months? That's the sentence petty criminal Kylie (Morgana O'Reilly) faces, after being picked up for her umpteenth robbery.

Fitted with an ankle monitor that won't let her go beyond her mum's front door, Kylie takes her rage out on her family by eating all their food, making a mess, and refusing to let them watch Coronation Street. Before long, though, she realises there's something scarier than she is lurking in the old house, and it's down to her (plus her probation officer, who's surprisingly keen on paranormal investigation) to figure out what.



There are elements of this New Zealand horror-comedy that you'll have seen before - the criminal on house arrest, the creepy neighbour, the house with a dark past – but writer/director Gerard Johnstone makes them feel fresh. His script is endlessly inventive, with a mystery that'll keep you guessing; it's also hilarious, with some proper scares thrown in for good measure.

If Housebound has a flaw, it's that it's a bit too long; the beginning of the third act drags. The final showdown is spectacular, though, and the finale oddly heartwarming. Kind of makes you want to call your mum. actually.

**EXTRAS:** Commentary by the director and a pair of producers, and deleted scenes. Sarah Dobbs



The director was inspired by an episode of Ghost Hunters where a woman talked very casually about a supernatural experience.

★ ★ ★ ★ EXTRAS ★ ★ ★ ★

### BLU-RAY DEBUT

### **Hawk The Slaver**

\*\*\* EXTRAS \*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW! 1980 | **PG | Blu-ray** Director: Terry Marce Cast: Terry Marcel, John Terry, Jack Palance, Patricia Quinn



MAKING ITS BOW on Blu-ray, this British fantasy flick is a mad old brew: a Tolkieninfused sword-andsorcery tale that steals

its cues from Sergio Leone Westerns, Hong Kong action cinema and Star Wars, all propelled by a mirrorballfriendly soundtrack that threatens to erupt into "Feels Like I'm In Love" at any moment.

The plotting is pure D&D, as a band of heroes assemble to take down an evil warlord. Armed with a magic sword and the mighty Bernard Bresslaw they traipse through an overcast medieval landscape that looks like the very twilight of the British film industry.

It's earnest, bloodless, modestly entertaining stuff, energised by Jack Palance as the Vader-helmeted villain, not so much chewing the



scenery as filling his face at an all-you-can-eat buffet.

**EXTRAS:** An absolute hog feast for Hawkophiles: "Revenge By The Sword" is a 1980 edition of ITV's heroically unpatronising kids' film show Clapperboard, filled with behind-the-scenes footage. There's more of the same in "By The Sword Divided", this time scavenged from ITV's The Electric Theatre Show. "Sharpening The Blade" brings more behind-the-scenes goodness - seriously, you'll feel like a mud-spattered peasant extra by the end of all this - while "Raw textless elements" collects snippets of rough footage as well as the original hawk animation from the titles. Also: original theatrical trailer; image gallery. Nick Setchfield

Art director Michael Pickwoad is now the production designer of *Doctor Who*; the latest TARDIS interior is his work.

### **Hot Tub Time Machine 2**



\*\*\*\* EXTRAS ★★★★

Release Date: 3 August 2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD



RELENTLESSLY obnoxious and pitifully unfunny. this is a movie to avoid like bathing with a toaster.

The sequel to the 2010 hit sees the same loathsome gang return (minus John Cusack), jump in their tub and land in 2025, where they try to stop a shooting in 2015. It makes no sense but don't worry, the makers don't care: all they care about is testicles, vomit, penises, swearing, anuses and drugs.

The biggest joke is that it thinks it's sci-fi savvy, with Terminator, Looper and Fringe references; there's even the Who-ish line, "It doesn't take you where you want to go, it takes you where you need to go". You certainly don't need to go anywhere near this film. **EXTRAS:** Commentary: 16 short

featurettes; deleted scenes. **Russell Lewin** 

### **Soldiers Of** The Damned



Release Date: 17 August 2015 | 18 | DVD/download



"Nothing so ridiculous can exist," scoffs one of Soldiers Of The Damned's Germans, He's referring to

Himmler's infamous occult department, the Ahnenerbe, but he might as well be talking about the grim trend for cheapo Nazi monster movies. Unfortunately, they're both real.

This particular example sees a German regiment escorting a scientist into a forest, where they find themselves haunted by the ghosts of their own victims.

It's heavy-handed stuff, and the stilted dialogue and wooden acting only serve to heighten the awkwardness. Even the real horrors alluded to can't lend this slop any credibility. Ridiculous, indeed. **EXTRAS:** Half-hour Making Of: three featurettes; isolated score; trailer Sarah Dobbs

### BLU-RAY DEBUT

### **Contamination**

The Eggs Factor



Release Date: OUT NOW! 1980 | 15 | Dual-format Blu-ray & DVD Director: Luigi Cozzi Cast: Ian McCulloch, Louise Marleau, Marino Mase, Siegfried Rauch, Gisela Hahn



### BACK IN THE

'80s Contamination was an official video nasty, vet here it is available with a 15 certificate. Okav. so

it's had that since 2004, but no wonder: aside from a few exploding people there's not much in it to warrant "nasty" status - nor that much of interest otherwise.

The inspired-by-Alien plot has extra-terrestrial eggs arriving on Earth, in a cargo ship that drifts into New York harbour, its crew dead and mutilated. Survivors star Ian McCulloch investigates, but before he meets the "Alien Cyclops" responsible we suffer a very saggy middle section in which not much happens in a foreign hotel. Dialogue is dire, the general plot's pretty dopey and those combustion special



effects are more likely to raise titters than gasps nowadays.

One for nasties completists, who this swanky Blu-ray is probably aimed at anyway.

**EXTRAS:** More than it deserves: a commentary by Fangoria editor Chris Alexander: an archive makingof documentary (23 minutes); a 2014 Q&A with director Luigi Cozzi and star Ian McCulloch (42 minutes); a featurette on Contamination's music, with Goblin keyboardist Maurizio Guarini (12 minutes); a new interview with the director (43 minutes): a featurette on Italian genre movies that cashed in on Hollywood blockbusters (18 minutes); a graphic novel based on the original screenplay; plus the theatrical trailer and a booklet. Russell Lewin



The film was part-financed by Colombian drug dealers; drugs were smuggled from Colombia to the US by some crew members.

### BLU-RAY DEBUT

### **Anthropophagous**



Release Date: OUT NOW! 1980 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD Director: Joe D'Amato

Cast: Tisa Farrow, Saverio Vallone, George Eastman, Serena Grandi, Margaret Mazzantini, Mark Bodin



### WHILE

Anthropophagous isn't among the very nastiest of the video nasties, it retains a certain degree of

notoriety thanks to a couple of gory cannibalistic sequences. Aside from that, it's a disappointing plod.

Italian sleaze king Joe D'Amato's shocker (called The Savage Island on the titles here), sees a group of tourists head to a remote Mediterranean island where the population have gone missing. But one chap does soon show up: a hulking giant (George Eastman) with a taste for more than the kind of meat served up by McDonald's.

He does the unstoppable killer thing in the manner of Jason Voorhees and Michael Myers, but Anthropophagous is so sluggish and



incompetent that you're left pining for some proper American slasher pic action. There are long, rambling sequences where almost nothing of any interest occurs. But, hey, at least the Med scenery's pleasant, and the final scene is a doozy. Ketchup with that, sir? **EXTRAS:** The Italian opening credits, and various original trailers, but the biggie is feature-length grindhouse documentary 42nd Street Memories, which chronicles "the rise and fall of America's most notorious block". It's a mite overlong, but who can resist learning the sordid secrets of the street where the likes of Massacre Of Pleasure, The Filthy 5 and The Sperminator ruled? It's a much better watch than the main feature. Russell Lewin



Joe D'Amato made 196 other films, most of them porn flicks. He had one other film on the video nasties list: 1981's Absurd.

### The Dead 2

★★★ FXTRAS ★

Release Date: OUT NOW! 2014 | 18 | DVD



### **BACK IN 2011.**

Howard and Jonathan Ford's The Dead transplanted zombies to Africa. This follow-up plays

pretty much an identical hand, by unleashing them in India.

Once again, we follow a Westerner on a mission: this time, a wind farm engineer heading to Mumbai to rescue his pregnant Indian girlfriend.

What little dialogue there is unfortunately tends towards confessional cheese, but star Joseph Millson (formerly Maria's dad in The Sarah Jane Adventures) sells the threat and has some powerfully tense moments; one, where he encounters a woman and her daughter trapped in a crashed car, is incredibly bleak. And as before, simply placing the undead apocalypse in an unfamiliar (and often stunning) landscape makes familiar old tropes feel fresh.

EXTRAS: Trailer, Ian Berriman

### **Split Second**

★★★ EXTRAS ★★

Release Date: OUT NOW! 1992 | 18 | Rhi-ray/DVD



### IN THE EARLY

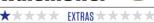
'90s, Rutger Hauer appeared to be operating a "say yes to anything" policy. The result was a

seemingly endless stream of macho actioners riffing on his Blade Runner fame. Split Second is a part of that, but does at least have a wry sense of humour. Hauer plays Harley Stone, a hard-ass cop hunting a murderer in a future London. It soon becomes clear, however, that this killer isn't human at all...

Split Second is dumb, loud and camp, but always entertaining. There's a glimmer of a good idea in its waterlogged post-climate change setting, and it's hard to restrain a grin when, off his tits on stress and coffee, bookish sidekick Dick Durkin tools up and goes on a rampage. Good B-movie fun. **EXTRAS:** Four minutes from an extended Japanese cut.

Will Salmon

# **Dead Rising:**



Release Date: 27 July 2015 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD



### WITHIN 30 seconds of this achingly belowaverage zombie flick we get a T-shirt-

shaped reference to its videogame series namesake.

A servobot helmet here, a Frank West statue there... the nods are littered throughout. But while generous fans tick these off, the rest of the film trudges through colourless exposition, a tired quarantined city setting and characters about as likeable as a garden strimmer to the unmentionables. It woefully misjudges the bizarro comic appeal and its tonal spasms are even borderline offensive at times; comedian Rob Riggle's Will Ferrell-esque comedy skits frame flailing attempts at genuine human tragedy, often involving young children. Dead on arrival.

**EXTRAS:** None. Matthew Gilman

### The Walking Deceased



★ ★ ★ ★ EXTRAS ★ ★ ★ Release Date: OUT NOW!

2015 | 15 | DVD



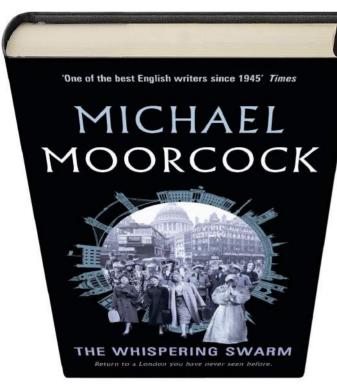
WITH MAKE-UP effects that look constructed from Crayola paint and Kellogg's cornflakes. a directorial style

best described as "drunk", and performances so flat they make the Maldives look hilly, this zombie spoof is a waste of your lifespan.

A comedy movie riffing on The Walking Dead, Zombieland, Warm Bodies and, um, The Hunger Games is generally a fun idea, but this effort is so amateurish it makes Scarv Movie look like Scorsese.

It's mean-spirited too. It's clearly been cut for content (scenes jump incoherently) but homophobic and misogynistic "jokes" remain, with a strip club sequence being a particular low point. We'd blow The Walking Deceased's brains out, but someone clearly got there before us. **EXTRAS:** None. Sam Ashurst





# **The Whispering**

Fusing fact and fiction

\*\*\*\* Release Date: 30 July 480 pages | Hardback/ebook Author: Michael Moorcock Publisher: Gollancz

### MICHAEL MOORCOCK

writes like a good reporter, which is to say he has an eye for telling detail yet cuts superfluous description. So austere can his prose be that you could even argue, possibly with some justification, that he's the least interesting stylist amongst major contemporary British novelists.

Except, of course, that Moorcock - whether you're talking the extravagant Ladbroke Grove hipster of the '60s or the marginally more sober, linen-suited big beard of today - has always been acutely aware of style. Even in those novels where it's clearest he's writing fast and for the money, there's an aesthetic choice being made. With a Michael Moorcock novel of any stripe, vou're always both in the moment and, as in the best popular fiction, about to be

taken somewhere else before you've had time to get bored.

There are plenty of clues as to where this approach sprang from in the opening section of The Whispering Swarm, his first major novel for a decade. That's because this first instalment in a new trilogy is, in part, autobiographical. Here, we meet the teenage MM, a precocious editor and writer back when, it seems, you could make a reasonable living mixing journalism with scribbling Sexton Blake and Tarzan stories.

Much here is already familiar as we follow a career on an upward trajectory via "a profitable facility for reviving the pulp sword-and-sorcery story", Cornelius, Behold The Man, New Worlds and such key friendships as that with Jack [JG B]Allard, who gets the driest of affectionate jibes: "I eventually realised that the only fiction he liked was his own."

Moorcock's personal life is far less smooth. Following a series of sexual adventures, he decides to settle down, but his marriage is troubled.

Then there's his ability to access Alsacia, a magical realm hidden in the centre of London, where the order of the White Friars live, where time doesn't move as it does in the mundane world, and where characters from history and fiction congregate.

Yet for all he sometimes doubts Alsacia even exists, it's only here that Moorcock reliably finds sanctuary from the "whispering swarm" of voices that plague him. It's here that he falls for adventurer and highway robber Molly Midnight. He learns too that he has an important role to play in ongoing battles in Alsacia. In the second half of the book, adventures imbued with the spirit of Alexandre Dumas follow.

It all makes for a considerable authorial balancing act as Moorcock (the 21st century writer, that is, rather than the character) weaves together events in the mundane world of his own past and his fantastical realm. And if the transitions between the two worlds sometimes jar, that's presumably intentional, a way perhaps to convey what it's like to be a working writer who unapologetically produces both literary fiction and, as a freelancer ever mindful of the need to put food on the table for his children. crowd-pleasing genre work.

Whether the novel is entirely successful is harder to gauge. That's

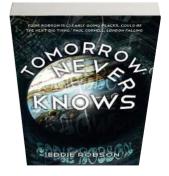
### **Moorcock weaves** his own world and a fantastical realm

because there's an underlying sense that, as the first offering in a trilogy, it's just one part of a personal reckoning ("These are the years of looking back and taking assessment," Moorcock recently told SFX) and we'll only know how successfully the author has divvied up his own actions when we see what follows.

In the meantime, The Whispering Swarm is a fantastically entertaining standalone. More importantly, it suggests that Moorcock's ambitious attempt to fuse together elements of autobiography, literary fiction and fantasy - or, as Moorcock himself has put it, "true fiction and fictitious truth" - will ultimately be successful. Welcome back Mr Moorcock; nobody else quite has your style.

Jonathan Wright

The next volume will feature alternate and "exotic" elements – according to Moorcock: "Paris. Maghreb. Africa. Prester John."



# **Tomorrow Never**

By Jupiter, it's murder!

Release Date: OUT NOW! 352 pages | Paperback Author: Eddie Robson Publisher: Snow Books

### THE BAD NEWS IN EDDIE

Robson's Tomorrow Never Knows is that even after colonising Jupiter and its moons, mankind remains beset by the plague of hipsters, "telling themselves that they lived both at the bleeding edge of NOW and also in another, more authentic time of their own choosing," in Robson's words.

Despite the Jovian setting, the story feels firmly rooted in the contemporary. People obsess over social media and there are references to New Order and Now That's What I Call Music compilations, plus a church that worships The Beatles (hence the title). At the centre of the novel is Loreto, a floating city on Jupiter, where Magic Alex, a pastor in the aforementioned church of the Fab Four, is framed for murder. Tomas, a savant with a talent for numbers, suspects something is wrong with the city itself, while college dropout Ashton has the strange ability to read people's lives from touching their hair...

Robson has a whimsical, gently comic style which makes his prose very digestible, but there's a lack of urgency in Alex's predicament and it takes a long time for the different strands to weave together. Robson is guilty of withholding information from the reader to suit the plot, and the final act deus ex machina is awkward, but the breezy tone helps to smooth out the bumps in the road.

**David West** 



The song title was inspired by a Ringo malapropism. He said the phrase during a 1964 TV interview with David Coleman

# Three Moments Of An Explosion

A 28-piece set of China

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: 30 July 430 pages | Hardback/ebook Author: China Miéville Publisher: Macmillan

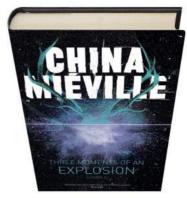
### THE OPENING STORY IN

China Miéville's second volume of short fiction acts as a statement of intent. Just two pages long, the tale that gives the collection its name deals with drug-fuelled "extreme squatting" in a building that's being demolished, with a bang. Here, having taken themselves temporarily outside chronology, urban explorers "have hours – subjectively speaking – to explore the innards of the collapsing edifice".

The pace of the collection barely lets up thereafter. There's no anchoring novella to slow things down. Instead, body-horror vignettes, eerie metamorphoses and reflections on revolutions follow with the rat-a-tat insistence of a speeding train. In context, it's tempting to see Miéville's opening story also as a deliberate foreshadowing: we readers have hours to tackle what follows (drugs optional), but things aren't going to end prettily – except possibly in a post-ruin porn kind of way.

So what's Miéville trying to achieve here? First up, we have no idea what the (anyway unreliable) authorial intention might be because he's doing little promotion for the book. Instead, we have the 28 texts themselves, some published before in earlier versions, which we're invited to consider together.

Taken as such, these stories appear to herald a new phase in Miéville's writing. To unpack that a little: you don't have to wholly



agree with Christopher Priest's 2012 warning to Miéville, part of a tirade against that year's Clarke Award list, that "he is restricting his art by depending too heavily on genre commonplaces" to think there was at least something in this notion. Miéville is a writer so steeped in genre – one reason his work so resonates with fandom – that his novels at times seem hemmed in by pulp fiction conventions, even as he knowingly subverts these.

In contrast, while there are stories here based on ideas that wouldn't be out of place in the cheapest fiction – the therapist who commits murder to "help" her patients in "Dreaded Outcome" springs immediately to mind; "Säcken" is a Hammer horror in note form – Miéville seems somehow freer working within short fiction.

The result is a volume that suggests Miéville is not merely looking for techniques to take back to his longer-form fiction, but doing something altogether more ambitious: exploring the unsettling possibilities of short fiction to describe our unsettled lives, rather as JG Ballard did in the last century. Read "The Condition Of New Death", which is simultaneously packed with grotesque flourishes yet seems tangentially, and somehow rather inappropriately, to deal with our early 21st-century obsession with symmetry, for proof.

And if Miéville's short stories don't have Ballard's consistency of tone, that may turn out to be a strength. That's because after reading *Three Moments*, you're left with no clear idea of what the author will do next, but a burning, if fearful, desire to find out.

Jonathan Wright



China Miéville is one of the writers behind Salvage, "a new quarterly of revolutionary arts and letters": http://salvage.zone.

### The Three-Body Problem

Not as sexy as it sounds

\*\*\*\*

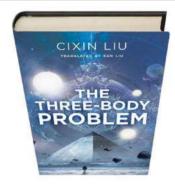
Release Date: OUT NOW!
399 pages | Hardback/ebook
Author: Cixin Liu (translated by Ken Liu)
Publisher: Head Of Zeus

### **CHINA HAS A LIVELY SF**

scene inaccessible to western audiences until recently, so it's a great pleasure to read this book by Cixin Liu – the country's most popular SF writer – in English.

The story is one familiar to science fiction fans the world over (we'll avoid giving away exactly which), with a dash of Philip K Dickian unreality. Handled expertly on the terms of the genre, it is seeing this tale played out through a different cultural lens that makes the book fascinating. A good part of the story takes place during Mao's Cultural Revolution, a period of history so crazed it reads like science fiction itself. The self-imposed doublethink of the time is applied with delicate force by Liu.

In the past, a weapons facility is built in a mountain paradise



destroyed by thoughtless government policies. In the present, the scientist Wang Miao stumbles across a conspiracy and is drawn into the mysterious Three Body game, in which a world is periodically ravaged by its trinary stars. An obscure connection makes this classic puzzle SF.

The translation is exemplary. Ken Liu states his aim as a translator is to preserve the impression of a foreign culture, a goal he assuredly achieves.

The book has a tendency to infodump but this is top-flight SF; smart, informative and engaging.

**Guy Haley** 

Cixin Liu has won China's Galaxy Award nine times. He was previously a compute engineer in a remote village power plant.

### The Unnoticeables

Not cyberpunk, just punk

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW! 288 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Robert Brockway Publisher: Titan Books

### THE BACKDROP OF THIS

novel cheerfully eschews the ordinary, everyday protagonists common in horror: one half of it is narrated by Casey, a social dropout in the New York punk scene of 1977, while the other concerns Kaitlyn, a stuntwoman in 2013 Hollywood. Yet within their worlds, both characters exist under the radar. Casey and his friends live lives so informal that they barely notice when members of their circle disappear, whilst Kaitlyn's entire job is to stand in for other, more famous people - she's not meant to be recognised for herself. And the creatures lurking in both locations prev on the unnoticed...

Naturally, Casey's story meets up with Kaitlyn's as the novel proceeds, and they take on these demons together. Two first-person narratives in one novel can be tricky



to pull off, but they're reasonably distinct and united by Robert Brockway's keen sense of humour. In fact the book is often very funny, which is welcome, because when it hits the horror it can be very grim indeed, featuring lingering descriptions of tar-monsters melting people from the inside out.

Excitingly, Brockway creates his own mythology rather than riffing off creatures from the established catalogue of horror, which keeps the novel unpredictable. It could perhaps do with a little more depth – Carey and Kaitlyn are the only really engaging characters – but it's fresh and highly readable. **Eddie Robson** 

? Th

The working title of *The Unnoticeables* was *Punks Vs Math*. Read the first three chapters online at http://bit.ly/unnotice.



### Armada

The Next Starfighter



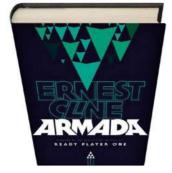
Release Date: OUT NOW!

345 pages | Hardback/ebook **Author: Ernest Cline** Publisher: Century Books

### **ERNEST CLINE'S PREVIOUS**

novel, Ready Player One, made clear that he's not a writer afraid of wearing his influences on his sleeve. Indeed, he also wears them on his lapels, trouser legs and on a giant papier-mache hat shaped like the Death Star. References to science fiction, fantasy and '80s pop culture abound, and as such he doesn't expect his readers not to notice that his new novel is a take on 1984 film The Last Starfighter. He acknowledges it, embraces it and takes it to new places.

There's some common ground with Ready Player One - the world is obsessed with a computer game but Armada takes place in the present day. Its hero, Zack Lightman, is sixth on the global leaderboard for MMO warfare game Armada. Of course, it turns out Armada is actually a training sim for



a forthcoming conflict with an alien race, and Zack is recruited to the military. But is there more to this war than he's being told?

Sometimes the geek references get a little wearing: sometimes they're over-explained when they could be worn more lightly, and sometimes they feel like easy gags. The characterisation can feel a bit off-the-peg, and plays up to nerdboy power fantasies. But as with Ready Player One. Cline's strength is his thriller-like plotting, which is the rigid spine under the in-joke froth and makes the book immensely readable.

### **Eddie Robson**



Steven Spielberg reportedly wanted to remake *The Last Starfighter*, but found the rights impossible to acquire

### **Doctor Who: The Drosten's Curse**

Adams to a tee

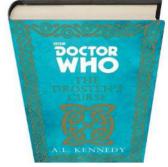
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Release Date: OUT NOW! 368 pages | Hardback/ebook Author: AL Kennedy Publisher: BBC Books

### **DOUGLAS ADAMS ONLY**

served as Doctor Who's script-editor for a single season, but he's been a lasting influence on the series ever since. This new adventure by literary novelist AL Kennedy is so in thrawl to Adams' familiar style that there's even a character named after his "City Of Death" pseudonym.

Kennedy has form with Doctor Who. Her novella The Death Pit found Tom Baker's Doctor loping around a carnivorous golf course. The Drosten's Curse is an expansion of that, with the original story reworked into the book's opening third. The Doctor becomes embroiled in the mystery surrounding the Fetch Brothers' golf course, encountering some creepy twins and an ancient alien entity. He also picks up a new pair of companions along the way. Of



these, receptionist Bryony is the book's sole voice of sanity. She's grounded and generally capable, while feckless monster hunter Putta is amusingly useless. They're both well drawn, Kennedy investing them with an underlying melancholy which grounds the absurd plot.

At over 360 pages it's longer than most Who books and that shows in a slightly aimless middle section. This is Doctor Who as magic realist shaggy dog story, but Kennedy's prose is excellent throughout and she effortlessly captures the tone of both the Doctor and the era that inspired her.

### Will Salmon



As well as being a writer, AL Kennedy is a comedian; she lists Josie Long and Bill Hicks as influences.

### **Under Ground**

**Bunker** mentality

### \*\*\*\*

Publisher: Macmillar

Release Date: OUT NOW! 368 pages | Paperback/ebook Author: SL Grey

### **IF IT WAS ANNOUNCED**

that a weaponised virus had been unleashed, what do you reckon you would do? Wait it out and hope for the best? Or hunker down in a subterranean sanctuary?

The characters in Under Ground take the latter option. A group of wealthy strangers lock themselves in the Sanctum, a luxury condo/ bunker in Maine. But things go badly wrong and they soon find themselves with no means of contacting the outside world and a body in the freezer.

This is something of a departure for SL Grey (the horror duo of Sarah Lotz and Louis Greenberg). Their Downside trilogy was surreal, sick and had shades of Neverwhere as well as Stephen King. In contrast, this is a high-concept thriller.

Are they going mainstream? Sort of. But Under Ground subverts its simple premise with a thick vein of



black humour and a gleeful disregard for its viral McGuffin. This isn't a book about the flu, but about the fears that drive a group of disparate people to think - and do - the worst. Throw in a gun-loving, Joffrey Lannister-level arsehole and you know that things are not going to turn out well.

Some of the twists are a touch predictable and it's not as uniquely unsettling as the previous Grey novels, but Under Ground shifts from slow-burn chills to its frantic finale with considerable expertise. A gripping book - and definitely not for the claustrophobic.

### Will Salmon

The teenage Sarah Lotz spent time homeless in Paris. The experiences later informed her novel *Pompidou Posse*.

### Iracer

Space station survival

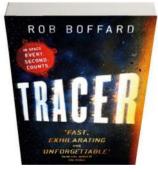
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Release Date: OUT NOW! 398 pages | Paperback/ebook Author: Rob Boffard

### GENRE AND MAINSTREAM

fiction are marching ever closer. with successes like The Martian proving that general readers will happily devour the right kind of accessible sci-fi adventure. Publishers are naturally keen to capitalise on this trend, but while debut author Rob Boffard's new SF thriller has enough pure action to make it a contender, it also trips itself up with some frustrating mistakes.

The setting is Outer Earth, a massive space station where the remnants of humanity live after the planet itself has become a polluted wasteland. With a million people crammed into its overcrowded corridors, Outer Earth is already a dangerous environment, but there's a lethal conspiracy brewing. Young courier Riley Hale is dragged into it by her latest delivery, and she's soon the only person who can save the station from destruction...



Tracer's story features plenty of intrigue, and the relentlessly fast pace gives the book strong momentum, but the vivid action scenes can't fully distract from the glaring flaws. Despite Boffard's smooth prose style, he falls prey to vague, shaky world-building, while his principal villains are painfully two-dimensional, so the book ultimately doesn't stand out enough from other recent "sealed society" tales (such as Hugh Howey's Wool). While *Tracer* works as a simplistic, page-turning action thriller, regular SF readers may be left wanting something a little fresher and more demanding. Saxon Bullock

Rob Boffard lost his sense of smell at the age of four after falling out of a tree in Zimbabwe. He also speaks Zulu.

### Roboteer

Humanity 2.0 v Humanity 1.0

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

448 pages | Paperback/ebook

Author: Alex Lamb

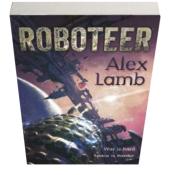
Publisher: Gollancz

#### WILL KUNO-MONET HAS

received an upgrade. As a techenhanced and genetically modified roboteer, he's a kind of supercharged hacker, able to handle vast flows of information during space battles. It's an ability he needs because his exo-planet colony, Galatea, is at war with an Earth that's turned to religious fundamentalism.

Worse, the Earthers, who have previously relied largely on brute force and hate Will's augmentations, have a powerful new weapon. How did they make such a technological leap? The familiar answer is that Earth has had an encounter with a Mysterious Alien Artefact.

The aliens aren't too impressed with the Earthers, but their interest is piqued by Will's augmentations. The ground is laid out for a novel that, in its best moments – by which we primarily mean the big setpieces where spaceships pummel each



other – recalls Peter F Hamilton. If some of the characterisation is less ably handled (the main baddie isn't nuanced enough, and some of Will's fellow spacers are a bit too generic crewmate) and the discussion of transhumanism/posthumanism vs being a meat puppet isn't always tightly enough woven into the plot, that's forgivable in a debut.

Besides, Lamb also shares Hamilton's ability to sustain a breakneck narrative where you always want to rush ahead to see what happens next. Hugely promising – and there are two more novels in the sequence to follow.

Jonathan Wright



Alex Lamb also teaches improvised theatre, and claims to be "Britain's foremost expert on spontaneous plotting".

## The Long Way To A Small Angry Planet

They aim to behave

\*\*\*\*

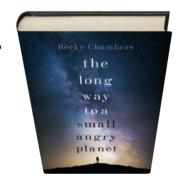
Release Date: 13 August 416 pages | Hardback/ebook Author: Becky Chambers Publisher: Hodder & Stoughton

#### THERE CAN'T BE MANY SF

fans out there who've watched Joss Whedon's Firefly without the thought occurring that wheeling and dealing through space with a crew of misfits could be fun. Becky Chambers is here to scratch that itch for you.

Rosemary Harper, a young woman with a secret that she's paid a lot to hide, gets a job as a clerk aboard Wayfarer, a rust bucket that's home away from home for its multi-species crew. Through her eyes, and those of her new colleagues – world-weary captain Ashby, irrepressible mechanic Kizzy, lugubrious cook/doctor Dr Chef, among others – we enter a universe full of life and colour, as the Wayfarer takes on the job of a lifetime. (Maybe the *end* of its lifetime.)

The world is explored in lavish,



loving detail, from physical environment to flavours to social customs. This is the book's strength and its weakness. It all feels lived in, but often the story can't breathe for infodumps – infodumps presented with personality and charm, yes, but infodumps nonetheless. This extends beyond the world, to the characters; Chambers can't resist telling us how to read their every action, as if she doesn't trust us to understand them properly. Also, while we have no objections to characters being nice, surely folks who live aboard a spaceship are going to have a few more disagreements? Nic Clarke

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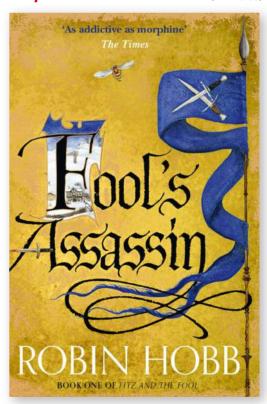
Long Way was originally self-published, via crowdfunding: the writing time was supported by a Kickstarter campaign.

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## 13 Days Of Midnight

Soul feud



Release Date: OUT NOW!

384 pages | Paperback Author: Leo Hunt Publisher: Orchard Books

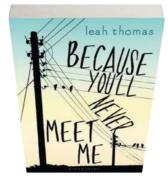
#### AS INHERITANCES GO. A

big fat pile of cash is probably better than an old book and eight ghosts – but that's precisely what 16-year-old Luke Manchett gets when his TV-ghosthunter dad dies.

Horror needs a strong foundation of normality in order for you to suspend your disbelief for the supernatural side of things, and that's precisely what Leo Hunt builds. Luke's world of school, rugby and drinking cider in the park with his mates feels true, making the vengeful spirits seem both believable and all the more scary.

It's a bit of a cliché to have the oddball help the hero, but that doesn't spoil the fun. Adult readers won't be too frightened by the story, but it's sure to be satisfyingly chilling to the YA readers it's aimed at. Miriam McDonald

? 13 Days took Leo Hunt from September 2010 to December 2014 to complete, while studying at university.



### Because You'll Never Meet Me

**Lives Less Ordinary** 

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Release Date: OUT NOW!
341 pages | Paperback/ebook
Author: Leah Thomas
Publisher: Rloomsbury

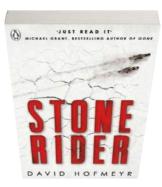
#### A BLIND PROTAGONIST

who "sees" the world around him via echolocation? Nope, not Daredevil – though at least the characters in this YA debut acknowledge the parallel early on.

Ollie and Moritz are destined never to meet. Ollie's epilepsy is triggered by electricity; Moritz has a pacemaker he would die without – and he was also born without eyes, instead relying on sound to "see".

The mystery lies in Ollie's hunt for the story behind his condition and his dead father, but the heart of the tale is the boys' developing friendship. Both blaming themselves for things that weren't their fault, both realising for the first time that they weren't as alone as they'd believed, it's a touching story of adolescence and self-discovery. **Rhian Drinkwater** 

Thomas says if this had a theme song it'd be Sufjan Stevens's "The Predatory Wasp Of The Palisades Is Out To Get Us!"



### **Stone Rider**

Stunted bikes

★★★★★ Release Date: OUT NOW!

305 pages | Paperback Author: David Hofmeyr Publisher: Penguin Books

#### **DIRT BIKING IS**

undoubtedly exhilarating for riders and thrilling to spectators, but it doesn't really translate to the written word. In this YA book, the only way for daredevil teens to escape a lifetime of drudgery is to take part in the Races – arduous trails packed with booby traps and hordes of murderous competitors also fighting for that ticket to a better life.

Though the bike stunts are the selling point, the device that makes *Stone Rider* more than a basic *Hunger Games* clone, they just come across as sort of flat on the page. The book's other ideas – a valuable and mysterious new mineral, an off-world paradise, sentient vehicles – are interesting, but unfortunately not very well explained. Sadly, then, it's not worth saddling up for.

**Sarah Dobbs** 

David Hofmeyr says he drew inspiration from the likes of *Pale Rider, Once Upon A Time In The West* and *Mad Max*.



### Terminator Genisys: Resetting The Future

**Art-heavy Arnie analysis** 

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

160 pages | Hardback Author: David S Cohen Publisher: Insight Editions

#### **MAKING-OF-THE-MOVIE**

books: bit pointless nowadays, aren't they? Why read one when there'll probably be a nine-part featurette on the Blu-ray? And who wants to read actors describing their characters *after* you've seen the film?

Fortunately, in the case of this spoiler-spraying survey, that's not the whole story. Though it won't keep you occupied for long (two hours should cover it), this large-format book has one great strength: concept art, and plenty of it, quite often sprawling across a double-page spread. Panoramas of resistance fighters battling hunter-killers; sleek, shiny "spider-tank" designs; a Frankfrom-Hellraiser-esque T-3000 shooting a deathly glare... it's like giving your eyeballs a holiday.

Whether it's worth paying upwards of £23 for the privilege, mind you, is another matter.

**Calvin Baxter** 

3

Favourite fact: Genisys costume designer Susan Matheson used to work for Mattel, designing outfits for Barbie dolls.

# SISSUES

#### **LOCK IN**

### Release Date: 8 August

Author: John Scalzi Publisher: Gollancz



Told from the perspective of an FBI agent working a murder case, this near-future tale concerns a virus that leaves its victims "locked in" awake and aware, yet unable

to move. Fortunately, those who contract it can transmit their consciousnesses into robot avatars. We said: "It moves along briskly, and doesn't want for clever ideas. However, the plot's far too neat, and too many characters are sketchily drawn."

#### THE QUEEN OF THE TEARLING

#### \*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Bantam



This debut stirs together dystopia and swords and sorcery as its 19-year-old heroine ascends to the throne of a realm locked into a peace treaty which

involves shipping her own people off as slaves. Book two, *The Invasion Of The Tearling*, just came out in hardback. We said: "Not much happens... An unsatisfying mix of *Maleficent* and postapocalyptic TV show *Revolution*."

#### THE RELIC GUILD

#### Release Date: OUT NOW!

Author: **Edward Cox** Publisher: **Gollancz** 



Another debut, set in a Victorian-style world where a million humans have been left trapped behind 100-foot-high walls after a war between magic users

and god-like beings. We said: "Cox has created a lush, detailed world while also hinting at a larger backstory... The gothic pulp-adventure action is often gripping and fun, but the author is less confident with the characterisation."

#### THE SOUTHERN REACH TRILOGY

# \*\*\* Release Date: 30 July

Author: Jeff Vandermeer Publisher: Fourth Estate



All three books in this trilogy (Annihilation, Authority and Acceptance) are hitting paperback on the same day. They concern a region that's been cut off from the

rest of the world for decades following a mysterious environmental crisis. Reviewing *Annihilation*, we said: "There's a new discovery or unnerving revelation every few pages. Immersive, insightful and often deeply bloody creepy."



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# FIRST READ AN EXTRACT FROM A NEW BOOK

# The Unnoticeables

by Robert Brockway

A nightmarish and hilarious tour through the 1970s New York punk scene, modern-day Hollywood and the diseased mind of *Cracked*'s Robert Brockway.



THE AUTHOR

Robert Brockway is a Senior Editor and columnist for Cracked. com. He is the author of two books, the cyberpunk novel Rx: A Tale Of Electronegativity, and the essay collection Everything is Going to Kill Everybody: The Terrifyingly Real Ways the World Wants You Dead. He lives in Portland, Oregon, with his wife Meagan and their two dogs. He has been known, on occasion, to have a beard. You can find him online at www. robertbrockway.net or on Twitter @Brockway\_LLC.

The survival of the human race is in the hands of a washed-up punk and a wannabe stuntwoman. We are well and truly screwed.

or the first time in a long time, I woke to find myself not in pain. A cold flood of fear washed through me. It ran down my chest and settled in my gut. I couldn't remember why waking up without pain was supposed to worry me. The reaction was just instinctual.

I lay in my massive, ridiculously soft bed for half an hour. A king-size memory-foam mattress that fills every single inch of my tiny bedroom, and an accompanying six-hundred-dollar down comforter are the only great and stupid luxuries that I allow myself. I was trying to figure out where the anxiety was coming from, and I finally pinpointed it: I was not sore, bruised, burned, or broken at all, and that meant I was unemployed.

At least partially. I still had my job waiting tables, but I hadn't done any stunt work in weeks. I guess sometime during the night, I finally shook the last stubborn bit of stiffness in my hip from that botched somersault I took while shooting *The Damned Walk... Again!?* So I woke up feeling physically great but with a trade-off of crushing spiritual ennui. For almost this entire month, I had been just and only a waitress.

I sighed and rolled out of bed. I had to roll several times just to reach the doorway and then heave myself out into the hall. My bare feet slapped the cold tile all the way to the bathroom. When I sat down to pee, it really hit me:

I was in absolutely no pain.

Even as a little girl, I would wake up each morning with a very small but persistent ache in my third pinky. Yep. Third. I have six fingers on my left hand. The superfluous little bastard has hurt me every day of my life, except for two: the day when my kid sister died in a house fire, and today.

I couldn't remember anything about the day of the fire. The

therapists said I'd repressed the memories, but every once in a while I got this feeling, like terrified déjà vu, and I just knew it was some small piece of that day coming back to me. I had that feeling now, when I suddenly remembered, in perfect clarity, waking up with no pain in my sixth finger fifteen years ago. I remembered running down the stairs to tell my mom.

It doesn't hurt anymore! It's all gone!

My mother laughed, picked me up, and placed me on top of the dining room table.

"Are you kidding me? Is this a joke?" she asked.

I shook my head and wiggled my skinny, single-knuckled little digit for her.

"That's great, baby!" she said.

And that's where the memory kicked out. Nothing past it, just a pleasant little short film and then *fin*. But I still had this sick fear that wouldn't shake loose from the bottom of my stomach. Something bad happened after that moment, I knew that much, but whenever I tried to think of the specifics, I could only picture a bright, colorless light and notes of toneless music. Memories defined by their absence.

I flushed the toilet, turned the shower up as hot as it went, and stood under it until the heat made me dizzy and pink. I slid the curtain aside and grabbed for my towel. I was so dazed from the warmth, I almost didn't notice the face staring at me from the other side of my window. I clutched the towel tightly against me, and instinctively screamed.

Jesus, just like some ditzy horror-movie starlet.

To my credit, the involuntary yelp only lasted a second. The tirade of increasingly detailed obscenities lasted for much longer. The face disappeared instantly, ducking away in terror. I barely had time to register a set of puffy red cheeks, greasy stubble, and glazed little eyes beneath a ratty green beanie. Still dripping wet, I threw my jeans and T-shirt on, slipped into a pair of flip-flops, grabbed the biggest kitchen knife I could find, and stormed out of my front door.

Mrs. Winslow, the nice lady that lives on the second floor, who, thanks to a series of misunderstandings, thinks I'm some sort of raging psychopath, gave me an odd look as I sprinted

past her, soaked, swearing, and brandishing a butcher knife over my head.

Add that to the list, I guess.

I kicked open the main gate to my apartment building, scaring a little white Chihuahua tied to the side mirror of a brand-new silver Ferrari.

Los Angeles.

I rounded the corner toward the side of the building where my bathroom window looked out, and saw the Peeping Tom.

"Oh, this is a bad day to be a pervert," I said, advancing upon him, twirling my knife in tight little circles. "I hope you liked my tits, buddy: They're the last things you're ever going to see. I hope my tits keep you warm in hell."

He wouldn't turn around. His back was convulsing oddly, and he was taking quick little breaths.

Oh, God, was he ...? Of course he was.

I took a step. Another. I wasn't sure where I was going with this: I was pissed off, true, but I wasn't "stab a hobo" pissed off. I didn't have a plan, but that didn't seem to matter. I was still holding a kitchen knife and approaching a masturbating bum in a dead-end side yard off Pico. Surely the situation would work itself out somehow.

I was just within stabbing range and felt the moment was coming to its head. I wasn't going to knife the guy, but I was at least going to have to say something. Maybe cut him a little, just to keep him on his toes. I opened my mouth to speak, then the hobo's stained canvas jacket abruptly ceased its bouncing. His rapid breathing halted. We were both still for a long moment, then he slumped to one side with a sickeningly fluid motion. I saw that one hand was covered in some kind of cancerous-looking sludge. It stank like burning plastic and flowed slowly outward from his body in a thick, rapidly congealing pool.

And just past him, shimmering in the air, was an angel.

I instantly knew it for what it was. I had seen one before. I was sure of it, but I couldn't recall where or when. The angel was an intangible blur of pure luminescence, but within it, barely glimpsed fractals and impossible angles rotated, shifted, adjusted, and disappeared. The radiant blob was bleeding all color out of the world around it. The spaces surrounding the light were colorless. Wan and oversaturated. It was too bright to see, but also too bright to look away. The deeper I gazed into the heart of the angel, the more I became aware of a sound. It was almost too subtle to hear, but the second I noticed it, it became deafening. There was an orchestra of reverberating chimes harmonizing over a dull, roaring static. It was like a thousand beautiful voices singing to drown out a million more screaming. I blinked and the sound stopped. I opened my eyes and it came raging back.

Waves of nausea and panic washed through me. I dropped the knife, and the angel sharply adjusted its focus. I couldn't pick out individual movements, but it seemed to be intent on the knife now, like it hadn't noticed the blade before. It suddenly appeared above the knife. I backed away reflexively and lost a flip-flop to a patch of mud beneath a leaking garden hose.

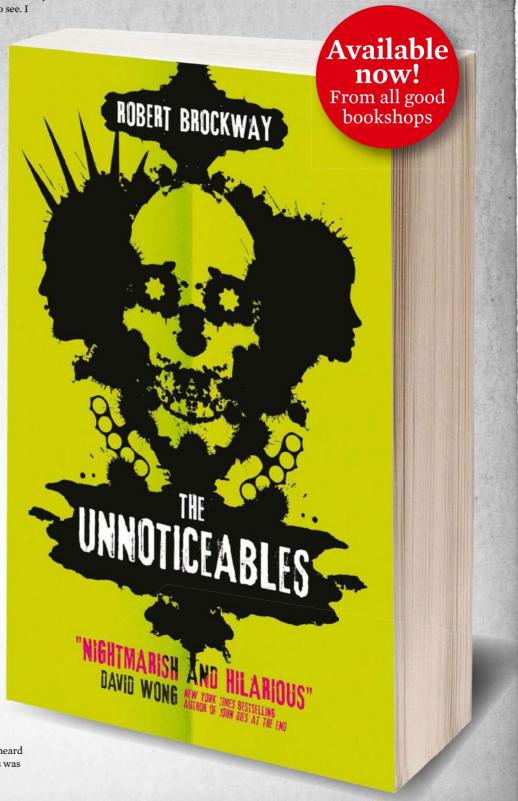
Before I could blink, it was there in front of me again, now focused on the sandal.

I turned and ran, and somewhere far behind me, I heard a crackling, sucking noise, as if some large, tacky mass was being scraped up from the ground.

I had a brief, scattershot flashback. Just still images. Polaroids taken of memories: torn little slippers with Corvettes on them. The taste of purple left on the wooden stick after the Popsicle was gone. My sister screaming. Flames on a set of paisley curtains. A noise like stepping on fleshy chewing gum.

I had heard that sound before.

To find out what happens next, pick up The Unnoticeables, out now from Titan Books (RRP £7.99). E-book also available. www.titanbooks.com



# **BOOK CLUB Synners** Pat Cadigan, 1991

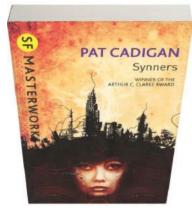
### Geoff Ryman recalls the pre-internet book that made some uncanny predictions

YNNERS IS ABOUT COOL people becoming less cool. The Synthesizers are into sex, drugs, tattoos and arrogance. They make virtual realities and videos - news, games and music videos so immersive that they turn everything into "porn" you can see, smell, but also feel as emotions. The Synners all know each other, and are ageing with grown up kids. The corporates are taking them over.

Gabe is a nice guy stuck making commercials or shoot-'em-ups; his daughter Sam gets an unexpected hack that will eventually make her the target of a police hunt. Gina is a tough old bird who doesn't apologise when she slugs Gabe by mistake. Visual Mark is an addled genius, betrayed and made a guinea pig by friends. There are at least 20 major characters in a plot so thick you could use it to fill in cracks in your wall.

After the introduction, you find out that a corporate called the Dive bought out our heroes' company to get hold of a patent - an organic brain implant that improves output to new levels. The Dive are illegally experimenting on friends. The one-third turnaround throws a spanner - something called Artie Fish starts talking to Sam. Basically, the internet has woken up and is conscious. As one of the characters says, "What's wrong with the name Frankenstein?" At the halfway turnaround the new implant gets loose, Cadigan puts her foot down on the accelerator, and the whole culture is upended. You want your classic novel structure, this is it.

Synners was published in 1991 so written before, friends, the web existed. This wired future is different from ours. The created video/VR is pushed out to screens or headsets by wires through a centralised media system. Nevertheless the book feels like it was written now. "Porn" is basically our reality TV cheaply enacted or filmed shows about food or prison. Cadigan is a prophet - we get Sat Nav misleading travellers, eye-tracking research, corporate hacks,



### You get a sense of **New York and fandom** in the '80s

privacy invasion and an Edward Snowden-like leaker.

Cadigan does great info-dump. The explanation of the implants from roughly pages 63 to 70 shows Cadigan in charge of neurology and cybernetics, enough to make me believe in the implants. And want one. I'm mystified as to how Cadigan knew this much so early. For me, one answer is in the acknowledgements - she knew the right people and she knew a lot of them. You get a sense of New York and fandom in the '80s. You can almost smell those late nights drinking.

The Synners feel modelled on rock stars. Gina and Gabe watch Hendrix in a hologram (we also get Dylan and Lou Reed). Gina remembers American Bandstand on through Live Aid.

"It was later that music started to stand for something,' she went on suddenly, in a quiet voice. 'There were all these ideas, the ideas were in the music. the music was in the ideas... This was before anyone got the bright idea to do the monster benefits to feed the hungry. You probably don't know what those are. Nobody does that anymore. Now they go get the hungry with cam and they call it 'poverty porn' or 'slum porn'."

Don't suppose you saw Benefit Street? Cadigan has a neat line in hard, funny comebacks, especially from women. The writing can be wise and curt to the point of aphorism. On why Gabe only had one kid: "More children would have meant more people he could disappoint, while for Catherine it would have meant more people who could disappoint her." SFF novels often take wing in the opening where the writing captures the breathless excitement of new ideas. Cadigan's opening comes on like a SFF Annie Proulx, long, rolling sentences that talk like an American future. When the Synners start making their new stuff, the prose reads more like poetry.

This is a story of everyday life - traffic iams and detox. This is a novel about making art and finding yourself. It's not a noir thriller with a bit of computer jargon. The characters don't need to know how to kill people before they're worth a story. This is about a group who are part of something big. That sense of multiple lives, like Facebook or Twitter, is another prophetic element in this coruscating novel, which won one of its author's two Arthur C Clarke Awards.

Geoff Ryman is a Nebula and Arthur C Clarke Award-winning author.

#### **LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!**

een Of Angels The first of the Quantum Logic series mixes a detective story, hacking into dreams, actual poetry and the awakening of an Al.



**Ancillary Justice** 

So you're a human body that's part of a huge AI - what happens when you get cut off? Space opera, inhabited worlds and mind-machine merging what's on offer here

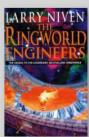


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We'll always give you a heads up about the next Book Club in *SFX*, so you have a chance to pick up a copy and read it before our expert passes their verdict. Get reading now!

**NEXT ISSUE**Gareth L Powell, author of Ack-Ack Macague gives his take on Larry Niven's 1979 novel The



If you've not read it before (or you've been planning on re-reading it), this is your chance to see what a top novelist thinks of a genre classic.

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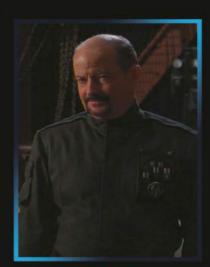
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# Rated



# **Secret Wars**

When Worlds Collide

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW! Publisher: Marvel Writer: Jonathan Hickman Artist: Esad Ribio



#### **JONATHAN**

Hickman doesn't do simple. A writer who's been grabbing attention since his debut The Nightly News in 2007, his

comic stories are intricate, amazingly designed tales that require serious attention to keep up with, and he's gained major success at Marvel with his epic run on the Fantastic Four and his sprawling Avengers/New Avengers saga.

However, even by Hickman's standards, the setup for his latest Marvel event comic is incredibly complex. The series is actually a semi-remake/remix of the 1984 Marvel event comic Secret Wars, and this 2015 incarnation is so complex and continuity-heavy that even the most dedicated comics fan may sometimes struggle to keep up.

The build-up to Secret Wars has been happening across Hickman's Avengers-related comics since 2012.

Universes have been colliding with devastating consequences, and issue one is a massive epilogue to his Avengers run, at the end of which the last two remaining universes - the mainstream Marvel universe and the "Ultimate" Marvel universe - were apparently destroyed.

However, thanks to Doctor Doom and Stephen Strange, the fractured remains of the two universes are melded together into a strange realm

### One of the bestlooking superhero comics in a while

named Battleworld. Here, history is mixed up as realms featuring different eras of Marvel continuity (from the "1602" universe created by Neil Gaiman, to the dark future of X-Men classic "Days Of Future Past") all coexist, policed by multiple Thors and ruled over by Doctor Doom, who's now ascended to godhood.

Boiled down to a synopsis, Secret Wars sounds like all the worst

excesses of superhero comics, but the first three issues are actually more entertaining and accessible than you'd expect. Told in broad strokes and kinetic setpieces, the story properly starts in issue two, where Battleworld turns out to be organised as a semi-medieval series of fiefdoms - think Game Of Thrones.

The oddball mix of epic fantasy and Marvel continuity is weird, lurid and a surprising amount of fun, as Hickman plays against expectations with well-executed twists (including a number of unchanged survivors from the pre-Battleworld history) and a hefty sense of mythic drama. It's also a visual feast, with Esad Ribic and colourist Ive Svorcina pulling off tremendous levels of cinematic scale, making this one of the best-looking mainstream superhero comics in a long time.

The various realms of Battleworld are explored elsewhere in a multitude of crossover miniseries, but unlike DC's similarly continuitythemed event Convergence, this core series is holding up as an entertaining read in its own right. Secret Wars is too complicated to win over many new converts to Marvel, but it's shaping up as an entertaining and action-packed burst of over-the-top superhero fun.

#### Saxon Bullock

The original 1984 Secret Wars miniseries was written so that Mattel could create a new range of Marvel action figures.



## The Pillbox

Life's a beach and then you die

#### Release Date: OUT NOW! Publisher: Jonathan Cape Writer/artist: David Hughes



#### IF GHOSTS ARE

creatures who've found a way to escape the trappings of time, then David

Hughes's latest graphic novel is a spook in book form.

The Pillbox captures time, twists it, and reconstructs it, to create a truly haunting experience. We don't want to spoil any element of a plot that, like The Sixth Sense before it, will make you want to experience it again, so we'll keep the description vague.

It opens on the story of a young boy, Jack, who's on a seaside holiday with his family. Jack meets another young man, Bill, after exploring a war-time pillbox, half-sunken in the sand of a Suffolk beach. Their encounter is brief, but has far-reaching consequences, as the narrative travels through time to tell Bill's story.

The Pillbox is a captivating experience, charming, disturbing and stomach-churning in equal measure. At times, it almost reads like an MR James tale, albeit an MR James who's been possessed by the spirit of David Shrigley. That's because Hughes's impressionist sketch-style art is as important as the words in delivering this bleak story of a boy's fateful day out on a beach, and the impact that day has on many lives.

Be warned: it might look like a picture book, but this isn't a kids' comic, with adult themes looming into view around the midpoint.

If ghosts are essentially memories in human form, then The Pillbox is a spirit made paper. Once you've encountered it, it'll stay with you forever.

#### Sam Ashurst



David Hughes's first regular gig, back in the early '70s, was illustrating a weekly cookery article in the *Daily Express*.



# **Southern Cross**

Take a trip to Titan

\*\*\*\*

#### Release Date: OUT NOW!

Publisher: Image Comics Writer: Becky Cloonan Artist: Andy Belanger



#### MAKING THE LEAP

from drawing comics to writing them doesn't always go smoothly, but acclaimed artist Becky Cloonan is already on

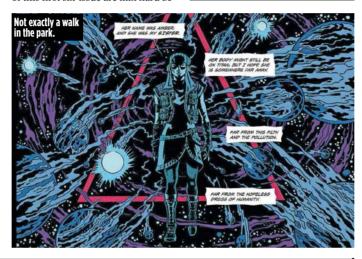
her way to proving her mettle as a scripter. Following up her wellcrafted self-published comics like The Mire, and her co-writing gig on DC's fantastic Gotham Academy, she's also tackling solo writing duties on Southern Cross, a creator-owned title from Image that's turning out to be a fascinating and atmospheric sci-fi thriller.

The story follows Alex Braith, a woman who's heading to Saturn's moon Titan in order to recover the body of her recently deceased sister. The vehicle for her journey is the Southern Cross, a gigantic spacecraft with a crew who all hold a variety of dangerous secrets. However, as a series of weird occurrences start plaguing those onboard, it soon looks uncertain whether or not Alex will even survive the journey to Titan...

Influenced by Agatha Christie murder mysteries, issues one to four of this first six-issue arc mix hard SF with a darker, more horrific edge while also finding plenty of room to explore the varied and interesting cast of characters. There's obviously a lot of collaboration between Cloonan and artist Andy Belanger, whose imaginative layouts and vivid imagery leaves the comic feeling like a blend of Alien and The Ballad Of Halo Jones. Sharp, edgy and gripping, it's another great Image sci-fi title, and further proof that Cloonan is a seriously impressive comics talent. Saxon Bullock



One of Cloonan's inspirations for *Southern Cross* was Francis Marion Crawford's 1886 ghost story "The Upper Berth".



# **Swords Of Sorrow**

Sisterly smackdown



#### Release Date: OUT NOW! Publisher: Dynamite Entertainment

Writers: Gail Simone, Leah Moore, Nancy A Collins Artists: Sergio Davila, Francesco Manna, Dave Acosta



#### **SWORDS OF**

Sorrow opens with a teenage boy telling a young girl that not even Jana can tell their tribe's masculine members

what to do, just before the pair are rescued from a rampaging dinosaur by the Jungle Girl herself, and it's hard not to see this first scene as a witty riposte to any less enlightened male fans who object to a crossover featuring solely female characters.

Drawing on Dynamite Entertainment's numerous licensed properties. Gail Simone brings together a disparate band of allies, using the familiar device of an

inter-dimensional portal to connect very different milieus. With its fast pace and frequent narrative cuts. there's little chance to get to know those involved, in the first two instalments at least, while details of the central mystical conspiracy of the villainous Traveller are also scant.

The main series is accompanied by the obligatory tie-ins, and some titles are more essential than others, judging by their respective first issues. G Willow Wilson and Erica

Schultz's Masquerade & Kato one-shot is a mildly interesting diversion concerning the Green Hornet's missing car, while Vampirella & Jennifer Blood is bogged down by Nancy A Collins devoting six pages to the latter's story to date. More successful is Leah Moore's Deiah Thoris & Irene Adler, which unites two vastly contrasting protagonists.

Mostly avoiding any cheesecakestyle poses, the art standard is also high, with the Frank Cho-esque Sergio Davila acquitting himself well on the central storyline. An absorbing read that's a refreshing alternative to Secret Wars' superhero overload. Stephen Jewell

Other spin-offs include Bennett and Andolfo's *Red Sonja & Jungle Girl* and Beeby and Rodolfo's *Pantha & Jane Porter*.



### **Howard The Duck**

Release Date: OUT NOW! Publisher: Marvel Writer: Chin 7darsky Artist: Joe Quinones



#### HIS POST-

credits cameo in Guardians Of The Galaxy was one of the biggest movie surprises of 2014,

and now Howard the Duck has officially returned to the mainstream Marvel universe. First created in 1973 by Steve Gerber and Val Meverick, he's an irascible talking duck from a parallel dimension. Here he takes a starring role in the latest Marvel title to give a comedic perspective on the superhero world.

Attempting to make a living as a private investigator, Howard still views the world of humans as perplexing and insane. Life doesn't get much better for him when an investigation into a jewellery theft leads to imprisonment in the intergalactic zoo of the Collector, a team-up with the Guardians, and an unexpected showdown with a gun-wielding Aunt May...

With scripts from Sex Criminals artist Chip Zdarsky, these first four issues serve up an offbeat tone with plenty of laughs. The art from Joe Quinnones hits the right level of kooky energy, but Zdarsky's approach is rather scattershot and his pacing is uneven, while Howard remains a spiky character who's not always easy to like. Lovers of daft comic entertainment will find lots to enjoy, but after The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl showed just how good Marvel comedy can be. Howard the Duck's latest incarnation is fun without being truly essential. Saxon Bullock

Howard's design had to be altered in the '70s after Disney threatened a lawsuit over his recemblance to Donald Duck



# **Batman: Arkham Knight**

Bat's all, folks

\*\*\*\*

Release Date: OUT NOW! Reviewed on: PSA Also on: Xbox One, PC Publisher: Warner Bros



THE ARKHAM series has legitimised licensed games like never before, delivering the ultimate power

the Dark Knight we truly deserve. Prepare to break into a lipsticksmeared Chelsea smile: this is an utterly brilliant end to the trilogy.

Gorgeous. Bold. Final. Batman: Arkham Knight is a passionate, fitting goodbye to the Caped Crusader. Developer Rocksteady recaptures a pinch of Asylum's unhinged atmosphere, then drenches it over a Gotham that dwarfs even City's chunk of criminal real estate. The grace of that iconic fighting system is still unmatched. Stealth sections still tingle with a predatory playfulness. Those immaculate gliding controls

ensure there's no other sandbox where the simple act of just moving is quite so joyous.

It's ten months after Arkham City. Gotham is in chaos, Scarecrow holding the city hostage with a strain of fear toxin. The Rogues Gallery are all playing nice for the greater greed. New nemesis the Arkham Knight is

determined to kill Batman with his drone army. And - oh yeah - it's Halloween, Better buckle up, Brucie.

Thank the DC overlords for the Batmobile. Wayne's souped-up ride is an unstoppable beast, from the Burnout-style Pursuit mode, to Battle Mode's vehicular analog of Bats' freeflow fisticuffs, to the Riddler's

Revenge Most Wanted missions. The camera's a bit clunky at times, but for Rocksteady's first attempt at a videogame car, it's a heroic effort.

Through the main storyline the interplay of fighting, driving and stealth is expertly balanced, while the main plot beats tap into Batman's insecurities in fascinating fashion. And without getting too spoilery, we'll simply say there's an amazing twist early on which enriches the entire narrative on a constant basis.

There are tears in the cape. It's so vast, it's hard not to pine for the original's scripted simplicity. The Arkham Knight is also a dud villain; too often coming across like a whining teenager. Yet as a showcase for PS4, the game's constantly smooth action and startling city - all sensational architecture bathed in sumptuous storms – is superb. Put simply, it sends the Dark Knight out in shining style. Dave Meikleham



Hold on if you're thinking of picking this up on PC - at press time the non-console version has some huge frame rate issues.



# **Lego Jurassic World**

Blocks with bite

\*\*\*\*

#### Release Date: OUT NOW!

Reviewed on: PS4 Also on: PS3, PS Vita, Xbox 360, Xbox One, PC, 3DS. Wii U Publisher: Warner Bros



#### THE LAZY

version of this review would be "Lego games are all brilliant, and this one lets you play as a dinosaur". Lazy,

but true. Lego Jurassic World - which actually covers the entire four-film series - has all the stuff that made previous games great (mischievous vandalism, gentle puzzles, the gluttonous consumption of studs) in a setting alive with the undiminished spirit of childlike adventure.

As is traditional for Lego games, key character traits are transformed into abilities, used to solve puzzles. Alan Grant can chop through vines using a Raptor claw he excavates; Owen Grady can sneak around while cloaked; Tim Murphy can use his night vision goggles to

explore dark places. The ladies come off slightly worse: they're generally stuck with the "can jump a bit higher" trait. Ellie Sattler, being a palaeobotanist, comes with a watering can and the Poison Ivy-alike ability to grow plants; Lex gets the ability to scream and shatter glass. It's slightly less rubbish than it

sounds, and she also gets a consolatory baseball to chuck about.

Not all the additions are so bright. Characters can track by following a glowing breadcrumb trail of information, uncovering secret solutions to puzzles. Think Mosquito In Amber: The Game - it's tolerable, if humdrum, and needlessly slow.



## Has all the stuff that made the old games great

The QTEs are less welcome, reducing iconic Jurassic Park moments to timed button inputs. But you can happily overlook this stuff because other bits are so perfectly paced. The kitchen scene, with Lex and Tim scrabbling away from Velociraptors, is a masterpiece remade with interlocking slabs. Pans sizzle. Pots clank, Lizards get locked in freezers. Plot and dialogue are gleefully folded into the game, and it rarely feels forced.

An obvious word of caution, though: it's rather spoilery if you haven't yet seen Jurassic World.

#### **Matt Elliott**



In a fitting tribute to both Lego and *JW*, you can build your own hybrid dinosaurs from the bits of dinos you've defeated.

# ADVENTURES IN SPACE AWAIT!



"Ideally, you should simply sit and watch the whole thing in all its inventive, funny and deliciously odd glory." - Den of Geek

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# **Box Of Delights**

What we've been playing with this month

# **1**B-9 Robot Figure

Diamond Select | Height: 27.5cm | RRP: £44.99 | FPI price: £34.99 |
Catalogue number: C1369

"Danger, Will Robinson! Danger! A hostile force has shrunk me to a height of 11!"

"Er... I hate to break this to you, but you're actually just a figure. Not the *real* B-9 robot from camp '60s series *Lost In Space*."

"I cannot accept that data. Does not compute!"

"It's true. But don't be sad! Thanks to flashing lights, extendable arms, and claws that open and close, you're pretty neat. Plus you're pre-programmed with 15 phrases."

"Then how am I conversing with you?"

"Ah. I knew I shouldn't have eaten those mushrooms I found in the woods."

# **3** Star Trek ReAction Figures

Funko | Height: 10cm | RRP: £9.99 each | FPI price: £8.99 each | Catalogue number: C7121, C7122, C7129, C7130

Classic *Trek* is the latest franchise to get the "simplified retro format" treatment of the ReAction range, which replicates the style of '70s Kenner figures with nostalgia-inducingly wonky results. Wave one features Uhura, Sulu (who, shockingly, actually looks a bit like George Takei), Spock and Bones. All have a little accessory: Uhura's is a communicator; Bones and Spock have tricorders; Sulu's packing a phaser. A second wave should be available by the time you read this: Kirk, Scotty, the Gorn from "Arena", and Vina, Pike's love interest from pilot "The Cage", in greenskinned Orion slave girl form.

# 4 Adventure Time Nesting Dolls

Bif Bang Pow | Height: 15cm | RRP: £26.99 | FPI price: £22.99 | Catalogue number: B7908

The loveable residents of Ooo have been immortalised by all manner of merch, but if you're after something a little different from plushies and action figures then look no further than these lovely Matryoshka dolls. Finn, Jake, PB, the Ice King and BMO are represented, with each of the five dolls made out of solid wood, with a pleasing hand-painted look. The traditional elongated shape does make Finn and Jake look like they've taken a nasty bump to the noggin though.

# **2** Iron Man Armour Gloves

Hasbro | Length: 20cm | RRP: £33.99 | FPI price: £26.99 | Catalogue number: C6919

You've worn Hulk's big green fists; now slip on Tony Stark's mitts for that full-on Iron Man experience. Well, as long as "full-on" is sticking your right hand out, pressing the big button on the palm and hearing five seconds of techy, groany sounds. You can't imagine Whiplash would be cowed into surrender. Instead, why not save them until winter when your toasty pinkies will be the envy of all your pals – piano playing might be a struggle, but, hey, who plays piano in the freezing cold anyway?!



### **TOYS & COLLECTABLES**



### THINGS 10 COME MORE GOODIES COMING YOUR WAY



#### **GHOSTBUSTERS TABLE LIGHTS**

#### **ETA: AUGUST**

UK manufacturers Groovy are behind this range of lights, which combine neon tubing with printed PVC inserts. There are four *Ghostbusters* designs: Slimer, Mr Staypuft, and two versions of the classic logo. Groovy are also producing a pair of *Doctor Who* lights (featuring the TARDIS, and the "DW" logo), plus ones with Stormtrooper and Vader designs and the crests of Batman and Superman.



#### THE FLASH POLICE BADGE

#### **ETA: OCTOBER**

Complete your Barry Allen outfit with this replica of the police badges flashed by members of Central City's finest. It measures about three and a half inches tall, and comes with a leather mount and chain. It's just one of three TV tie-ins being produced by DC Collectibles – a Gotham City PD badge is due in September, with a Starling City badge from Arrow set to follow in 2016.



#### **ALIENS DOG TAGS**

#### ETA: JANUARY

You'll look like some tough hombre wearing one of these replicas of the clear acrylic tags worn by the Colonial Marines in James Cameron's 1986 classic. There are ten to choose from in all; tags for Sergeant Apone and Private Frost are available now, with Bishop, Dietrich, Drake, Gorman, Hicks, Hudson, Vasquez and Wierzbowski still to come.

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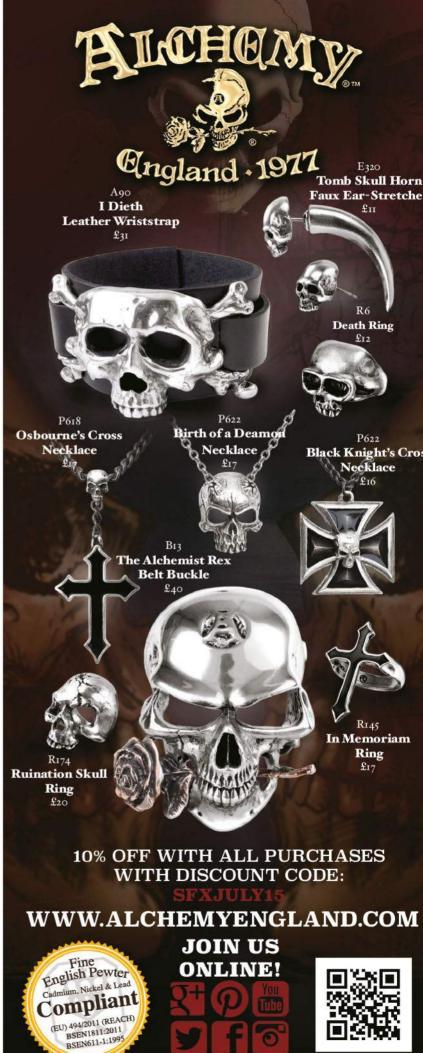
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# What's On

What to watch when this month



 Tuesdays - Is mankind winning against those alien invaders yet? It's the final season of Falling Skies on Fox.

Over on Sky 1, it's time to go

puppet crazy with series two

of fantasy sitcom Yonderland.

- Wednesdays Who'd have thought a spin-off from the movie Legion would make it to a second series? See the evidence on Syfy.
- Thursdays Wayward Pines reaches the end of the road on Fox, while Defiance and Beauty And The Beast are still showing on Syfy and Watch, respectively. Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No! continues the unholy alliance between fish and weather system on Syfy on 23 July.
- Sundays She's finally here!
   Agent Carter does her pre-SHIELD
   spy thing on Fox, while Humans is all
   about the machines on Channel 4.



# Game Of Thrones

The rise and fall of Westeros

FTER FOUR YEARS OF WORLD-conquering, battle-hardened telly, for the first time this year the chinks in Game Of Thrones' armour started to show. It's all relative, of course. Even a Game Of Thrones that isn't at the height of its powers remains exquisitely assembled, with awe-inspiring production design, compelling performances and top-notch dialogue. But after racing through George RR Martin's mammoth tomes without once feeling like inferior imitations, season five suffered from some ill-judged alterations and sluggish storytelling.

The source material is partly to blame; as GRRM's books have become more unwieldy his tales have suffered. As a result season five was where *GoT*'s abundance of characters finally became a problem. With rarely more than a few minutes to spend on one character before jumping half way across the world *GoT* felt more disjointed than ever this year. It's telling that the season's best moments all came

when the camera stayed put for more than five minutes.

Dorne in particular felt like a missed opportunity. We could watch the Kingslayer and his sell-sword chew the fat all day, but as a piece of storytelling Jaime and Bronn's excursion went nowhere, building to a character death that had zero emotional impact. Worse yet were the

Sand Snakes. After Oberyn ensnared hearts in seconds it's baffling how miniscule an impression his deadly daughters made.

Yet again the show stirred up controversy for its depiction of rape. *Game Of Thrones*' casual approach to sexual assault is problematic for much bigger reasons than mere entertainment, but it highlighted the fact that *GoT*'s reliance on watercooler shock moments has left us immune to what should have been some jaw-on-the-floor twists and turns.

#### BONUS FEATURES

Ratings: The season five finale broke *Game Of Thrones'* ratings record, with 8.11 million people watching the initial airing live on HBO.

Write Like The Wind: In most cases the TV show has now completely caught up with George RR Martin's books. It's thought he's aiming to get the next novel The Winds Of Winter out before season six.

Dand Cameo: US metal band Mastodon cameoed as Wildlings at Hardhome, joining a long line of musicians who have appeared as extras in the show.

Best Line: Malko: "The dwarf lives until we find a cock merchant."



It didn't help that many of this season's biggest developments were telegraphed with the subtlety of John Cleese's Lancelot storming a castle. Part of the reason why Ned's death and the Red Wedding were so shocking was because they were genuinely unexpected. If you didn't expect the Night's Watch and scowly-faced Olly to turn traitor on Jon you weren't paying attention. By relying on shock and misery moments to keep its audience hooked, paradoxically, *GoT* is almost incapable of actually surprising anymore.

Season five wasn't without its problems then, ones I've dedicated a disproportionate amount of time to here because it goes without saying that, for the most part, *Game Of Thrones* was as gripping as ever this year. Cersei, Stannis, Dany, Jon and Arya all had fascinating and emotionally engaging character arcs. Finally seeing Tyrion and Dany together, for example, felt electric. And the final triumvirate of episodes rank among the best *Thrones* have ever committed to the screen. "Hardhome" was the season highlight – an utterly astonishing and heart-racing White Walker massacre, almost topped just a week later when Drogon finally spread his wings. Nothing on TV does spectacle like *Game Of Thrones*.

Just last year it felt like *Game Of Thrones* was never going to run out of steam. If this season proved anything it's that *GoT* faces an uncertain future, particularly now that the show has reached the end of Martin's source novels. And with just two seasons left (or so we think) there's an awful lot of plot threads to tie up. Top of the list: is Gendry ever getting off that boat? **Jordan Farley** 

mindproce •

# Halle Berry

Molly Woods returns for the second season of *Extant* 

### What can you tell us about the new season?

Season two is a reboot, so we're taking the themes of season one a little bit further. Last year's show was a self-contained story because we didn't know if we were going to come back for more. Now, we can head off in lots of different directions.

### Where do we find Molly at the start of the season?

At the beginning, we find Molly in a place called the Rest Well Recovery Center. It's basically a mental hospital and she's there against her will, but then along comes JD Richter – played by Jeffrey Dean Morgan. He takes her away to help solve a crime.

### How would you describe the relationship between the pair?

These two unlikely people form a bond and a connection. They quickly realise that they both need each other – and they have great chemistry.

#### How much do Molly's two children - robot kid Ethan and her nameless half-alien child - feature in the story of season two?

Season two is not just about Ethan and the humanic world of robots. It's also about her half alien/half human child. We'll be asking, "What do they want? Could Molly be the key to evolution? Would we be wiser, smarter and better if we co-existed with them in some way? Would our species grow? Would we evolve? Is this what we need to do to get to the next step of our evolution?"

### How do these questions affect Molly?

Molly is in the middle because she's mother of both children. She's got one foot in each world and she has to navigate her way through this process, which has been a lot of fun for me to play.

#### **Adam Tanswell**

Extant season two airs Thursdays on Amazon Prime.





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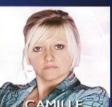
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**ALIENS** 





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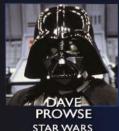






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# Sense8

Mental global link-up

ENSE8 IS MADE FOR TV. Well, clearly. It's a TV show, after all, albeit one made for Netflix. But more than that, it's a series that gives modern TV drama clichés a thorough work-out. Montages, multiple parallel plots, ongoing conspiracy, cliffhangers, flashbacks... it doesn't reinvent them, it wallows in them. Especially the montages.

The series is the brainchild of the Wachowskis and Babylon 5 mastermind J Michael Straczynski. Its core concept is custom-built for montages. A group of eight disparate, unconnected characters around the world begin to mentally communicate with each other, somewhat randomly and intermittently at first. They experience what

the others are experiencing and can even loan out their talents. Which is handy when, say, the van driver runs foul of some local thugs: thanks to the Korean kickboxer, he can become his hero - Jean-Claude Van Damme.

The first episode suggests the show might go full throttle down the conspiracy plot route with evil guys taking down the "Sense8", but this element is dialled down. Instead it concentrates on the individual storylines: the bride marrying the wrong guy out of a sense of duty; the struggling driver accepting a dubious job to help his ailing mother; the gay film star scared his career will be ruined if he comes out.

#### BONUS FEATURES

TV: The show loves really unsubtle thematic links, such as when one characters says, "You know what it's like when you're the only one in a cinema not laughing?" then the next scene is a character crying in a cinema. It happens lots Icelandic Legends: Riley

mentions the "hidden folk" of

her homeland, a reference to the Huldufólk of Icelandic lore. Going Global: It's an expensive show, with filming in Chicago, San Francisco, Seoul London, Berlin, Reykjavík Mexico, Nairobi and Mumbai, Best Line: Amanita: "Impossibility is just a kiss away from reality," (Yes

characters do sound like Kosh

from Babylon 5.)

As such, it sometimes feels like the Wachowskis are simply adapting their note books, throwing every idea they've ever had on screen. There's also a sneaking suspicion that the "mental link" simply acts as a stealth deus ex machina: a handy device to use to get any character out of a tight spot.

But the show gets away with such shortcomings because when it kicks into gear it delivers shamelessly crowd-pleasing setpieces, from "wow" car chases and explosive action to a cheeky "virtual" orgy session.

It's also incredibly LGBT, with multiple gay, lesbian and transgender characters and sex scenes for viewers of all persuasions. It's a shame all these characters have to deal with some sexuality-related issue (why not have a gay character whose story isn't connected to being gay?) but it's refreshing to see a show like Sense8 being so all-encompassing.

Undeniably clunky and contrived in places - and possibly a little overlong - Sense8 nevertheless regularly delivers enough exquisitely-crafted TV moments to leave you wanting season two. Dave Golder

# YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING... JONATHAN STRANGE & MR NORREL

Did the Beeb's adaptation cast a spell over SFX's Facebook followers?

Excellent performances from all the cast and nice to see the BBC offer something different on a Sunday night, Robert Allen

The best thing the BBC has done in a long time

#### **Daniel Savage**

Typical British period drama mixed in with a bit of magic, like a grown-up Harry Potter

Robert William Graham

It has a good cast, lovely costumes, a terrific concept and it looks great... so why is it so deadly, mind blisteringly dull? I've given up on it as I have some paint to watch dry. Beige. Beige paint. Steve Hyett

Really wanted to like this, but despite fine acting, photography and effects it just didn't hold me. Kept going through three eps

but have now given up. May try it again later in the year as it feels like an autumn/winter series.

#### Robert White

I'm absolutely loving it. For those calling it dull, I'm reminded of a quote from Jane Austen - "I do not write for such dull elves / As have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves."

Zoe Worthington

A little slow (but then the book was rather glacial in its pace) but I am enjoying it. Slightly too close an adaptation, like Watchmen

#### Neil Bartlett

I loved the book and the Beeb's adaption does it total justice with an original feeling of its own - a bit Pride And Prejudice And Magicians.

Rik Laan

The cast are brilliant and the immersion in the alternate timeline is engaging and credible. A far superior product to the aptly named Penny Dreadful **Thomas Davies** 

#### Fantastic, I just wish

more people were watching it. Steve Wasling







# Orphan Black

When Clone Clubs go to war

HE KICK-ASS CLIFFHANGER ending of Orphan Black's second season dropped a huge twist into a show that already staggers under the weight of at least three good twists per episode - that there are male clones as well as female ones. Gasp! And for the majority of this third year the Castor clones (all played, with steel,

by Ari Millen) wreak exactly the kind of havoc you'd expect them to wreak, as Sarah and the rest of her sisters struggle to figure out where they've come from and what they're for. Once you've thrown an unhinged US military wing into a mix that already includes at least two shadowy organisations, you're definitely into some serious conspiracy theory territory.

But, sadly, this ramping up of the arc plot, while admirable, doesn't always work. The first two-thirds of the season brilliantly feature

Helena - and later Sarah stuck in a devilish internment camp, going through trials that could have been too dark and unwatchable if it hadn't been for Helena having amusing hallucinations of a talking scorpion (as you do). But sequences like these contrast harshly with the enjoyably silly plotline that has Allison running for school trustee, or Cosima's rather dull plot-arc that sees her do nothing except strike up a new relationship with Shay (Lost Girl's Ksenia Solo). The first two seasons of Orphan Black managed to combine "domesticity" with "conspiracy" beautifully, but once the stakes get this high, realism starts to lose out.

Still, that's a small quibble and the rest of this season has many highlights - whether they be the unlikely scenario of Helena and Donnie

bonding over a few murders, or Tatiana Maslany having a whale of a time, albeit briefly, as yet another clone (let's hope we see more of Krystal in the future!). It's just a pity that the whiplash between the dark and light elements of this series has been so severe this time around; hopefully that will be smoothed out a touch when we rejoin our favourite clones next season. Jayne Nelson

#### BONUS FEATURES

Not-So-Great Britain: A trip to London in one episode suffers from some awkward errors, such as directions being given in blocks" and trousers being referred to as "pants". We expect better from a Canadian series! Hidden Talent: Mrs S, aka

Maria Doyle Kennedy, gets to sing in episode nine. and she's bloody good. It's not surprising, however she provided backing vocals in 1991's The Commitments and has released a solo album. What The Hell? We see a

glimpse of a bizarre worm in the season finale. The show's co-creator Graeme Manson says. "We call that the maggot-bot. They've got some creepy things in

Best Line: Felix, seeing Cosima's comfy jumper: 'Oh my god. It's hideous. It's like you've been mounted by a llama.'

BROADCAST UK: DISNEY XD US: DISNEY XD

# Star Wars Rebels

Fifty shades Darth-er...

NLESS YOU'VE BEEN ROTTING in Jabba's dungeon the past few months, you'll know that Rebels has stopped teasing and wheeled out Star Wars' biggest bad: a whole season after his Spark Of Rebellion cameo, Lord Vader has arrived. It's enough to overshadow the return of another fan favourite, but rest assured, season two premiere "The Siege Of Lothal" suggests there's plenty of arc in store for Anakin's former Padawan Ashoka Tano.

And what about our core heroes, the Empire-fighting crew of the Ghost? Starting the season with a "We're baaaack!" bang, the all-action episode doesn't leave much room for character-building. Chuck in the (entertaining) distraction of another SW icon's



appearance (card player, gambler, scoundrel, you'd like him) and the likes of Sabine, Zeb and Hera are largely reduced to ballast.

Happily, there's no shortage of dramatic weight for Kanan and Ezra to shoulder, including a showdown with a tall, dark antagonist - which oddly thrills all the more for being completely one-sided. With James Earl Jones back in the recording booth and a heavily Ralph McQuarrie-ified look (it's like

#### **BONUS FEATURES**

Best Dogfight: A solo Fighter versus all the Rebels, Completely unfair odds... for the good guys. **Best Guest Appearance** By An Imperial Overlord That Isn't Darth Vader: Yeah, you know who. Sends a shiver with its callback (callforward?) to a key Empire Strikes Back confab. Best Force Usage: Aside from all the Vader stuff. there's a great Jedi mind trick scene involving Kanan and some Stormtroopers Best Line: Too good to spoil, but it's three words. delivered by James Earl Jones with full bombast and you'll know it when you hear it. The audience at Star Wars Celebration (where the episode premiered) went nuts.

he's stepped off the cover of the original '76 novelisation), this is the Sith bigwig at his most old-school unstoppable.

"TSOL" is effectively a Vader Greatest Hits: Force-throwing great lumps of scenery; flexing his zero-tolerance managerial style; 'sabering in classical, no-rush fashion... there's even the nearest thing to an "I am your father" moment, one that fortifies Rebels' links to Clone Wars and teases a mouth-watering future stand-off. How long it'll be before we get there remains to be seen; the show will likely hold back Vader as a secret weapon, to be used sparingly for maximum impact. But with such a heavyweight looming in the

background, you can't help feeling Rebels will need to double some of its characterisation efforts to maintain a healthy Force balance.

Matthew Leyland





# SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest moments from the month in TV



### • CROSSOVER OF THE MONTH

Arrow's Bex Taylor-Klaus
appeared in iZombie looking,
well, just like Sin. Does this
mean the two shows are set
in the same universe?



### MYSTERY OF THE MONTH

Barbie's quest to find his missing feet continues on Under The Dome.

# SEPARATED AT BIRTH OF THE MONTH

We're still not convinced that Humans' Odi and In The Flesh's Kieren aren't played by the same bloke.

# WORST HIDE AND SEEKER OF THE MONTH

Now where could Datak be on Defiance?



#### SAD CLOWN OF THE MONTH

You wouldn't want Salem's Mary Sibley at your kid's birthday party.

#### FUTURE BEST-SELLER OF THE MONTH

"Erotically inclined" space love story The Time Hump Chronicles by Orange Is The New Black's Crazy Eyes is Star Wars meets 50 Shades.



Wayward Pines' Dr Jenkins sure does love his Risk.



Forget ear trumpets, *Dark Matter*'s Five has a much more fashionable cosplay idea.



#### LEAKY ROOF OF THE MONTH

Magic? Nah, Mr Norrell just needs a builder to



### BLUE PETER OF THE MONTH

This "Smart Rain" drone from *The Messengers* looks like it's made of Meccano, hand-held fans and some tubes of kitchen roll.



# **John Barry**



#### NICK SETCHFIELD, FEATURES EDITOR

Tragic confession time: I cannot enter an airport without cueing John Barry on my iPod. Suddenly there's an alluring contessa in every departure lounge, double agents in the Duty Free, international assassins spooning noodles in Wagamama. With

a Barry soundtrack any airport becomes a portal to peril, possibility and intrigue. Yes, even Luton.

If John Barry's music enhances my world just imagine what it did for James Bond's. It's a sound embedded in 007's double helix, as essential as Connery's finely-tailored machismo or Ken Adam's opulent sets. Think of the serpentine menace of the *Thunderball* score, the urgent pulse of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, the zero gravity grandeur of *Moonraker*'s "Flight Into Space".

Barry dubbed it "Million-dollar Mickey Mouse music" but it's so much more. Somehow it's always autumn in Barry's world, and just on the edge of cool blue twilight. Built from lush, aching strings and bombastic brass, his music has a signature mix of romance and malevolence, impregnable glamour and rattlesnake shiver: the perfect soundscape for Ian Fleming's superspy.

In his '60s prime Barry cut a figure every inch as dashing as 007. There's a starkly suave black-and-white shot of him with second wife Jane Birkin (above). The pair look as untouchable as showroom-fresh E-type Jags. In earlier days he shared a bachelor pad with Michael Caine – future archaeologists may conclude that this was the very epicentre of Swinging London. Caine recalls hearing his flatmate finally nailing "Goldfinger" at 4am, just as the sun rose: "I was the first person in the world ever to hear 'Goldfinger', and I heard it all night..."

Barry was more than Bond, of course. The doomy, liquorice-dark minor chords of *The Persuaders!* were a brooding counterpoint to Roger Moore and Tony Curtis' sunkissed hi-jinks on the French Riviera – a countermelody, almost. Meanwhile *The Ipcress File* was as seedy and haunted as a bedsit voyeur, an antidote to Bond glamour still stamped with Barry's trademark cool.

But it's Bond that makes Barry endure. A 1970 compilation album was titled "Ready When You Are, JB". John Barry? Or James Bond? In the end they're indivisible.

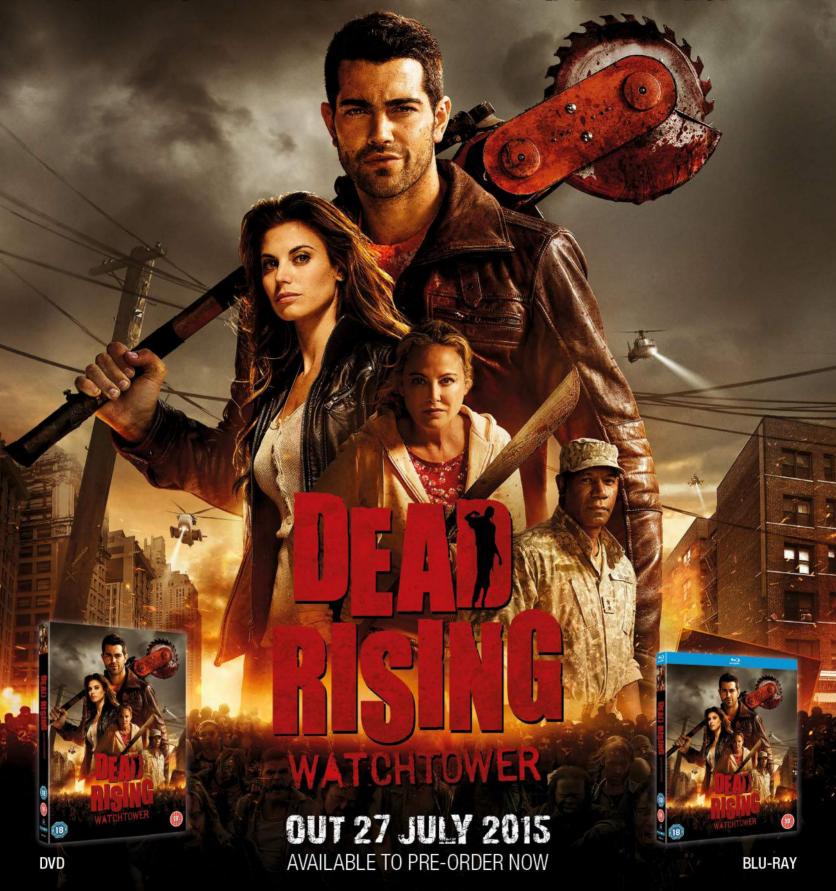
#### • FACT ATTACK!

- John Barry was born 3 November 1933 and died 30 January 2011.
- His father was a former projectionist who later owned a chain of picturehouses in the north of England.
- Barry arranged Monty Norman's James Bond theme for *Dr No* and scored a further 11 films in the series. His last entry was 1987's *The Living Daylights*.
- He won five Oscars across his career and was nominated for two more.
- From Russia With Love saw Barry introduce "007", an alternative James Bond theme that featured in the films until 1979's Moonraker.
- ▶ The eight-note opening of Diamonds Are Forever reflects the eight sides of a diamond.

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SEE YOU NEXT MONTH! WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST DETAILS ON PAGE 27

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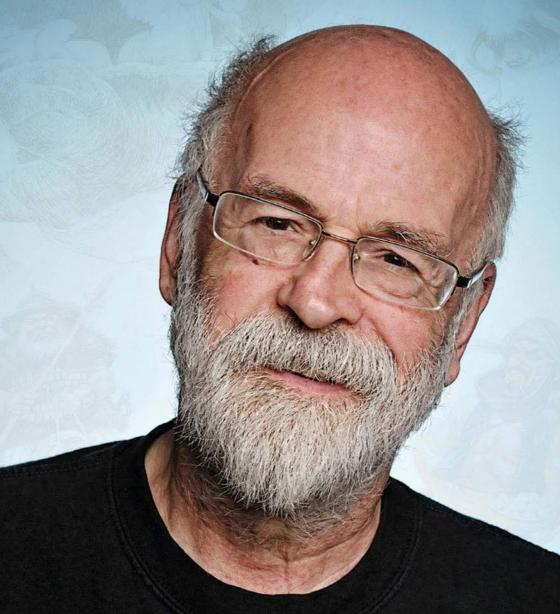




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# TERRY PRATCHETT AND DISCWORLD

An **SFX** celebration 🦡

# TERRY PRATCHETT AND DISCWORLD



ir Terry Pratchett was one of the most widely read authors in the world. He sold more than 85 million copies of his books, was knighted and maintained a work rate that was intimidating to say the least. Two books a year was not a rarity - and in some years he published three. It's not hyperbole to say he was a genius.

And yet, that's not why we hold him in such high regard. We enjoy his writing because of its sense of humour and gentle morality, and we admire the man because he stood for things. Whether it was trying to save endangered animals or raising awareness of Alzheimer's disease - his "embuggerance" - Terry used his influence and wealth to make the world better.

And he was one of us. While his profile only ever rose, he remained a part of the SFF community. He'd go to cons, sign autographs and spend many hours with fans.

The news of Terry's passing on 12 March this year was a shock. But while we remain sad that the man is no longer with us, his work lives on. And within hours of his passing, fans had raised thousands for charity. Inspiring people to make the world a bit better - that's his true legacy. Thank you for the good times, Terry.

# 10 AMAZING FACTS ABOUT TERRY PRATCHETT

Terry's first published work was a short story, "The Hades Business". He sold it to *Science Fantasy* magazine at the age of 15, but it was actually written two years previously.

At the age of 17 he got a job as a trainee reporter. Within a few hours on the job he'd already seen his first dead body. "That's when I learned you can go on throwing up after you run out of things to throw up," he later said.

Although he was already writing novels, Pratchett didn't want to abandon the safety of a full-time job, so he took the role of a press officer with responsibility for three nuclear power stations. With typical "good" timing it came just after the meltdown of the reactor at Three Mile Island in the United States.

Psephophorus terrypratchetti is a species of fossilised sea turtle first discovered in 1995. It was named by Robert Kohler in honour of his favourite author.

Pratchett was named an OBE in 1998 and was knighted for services to literature in the 2009 New Year honours list.

Terry was the best-selling author in the UK through the '90s until 2005 – and remains the country's most shoplifted! His books are translated into 36 different languages.

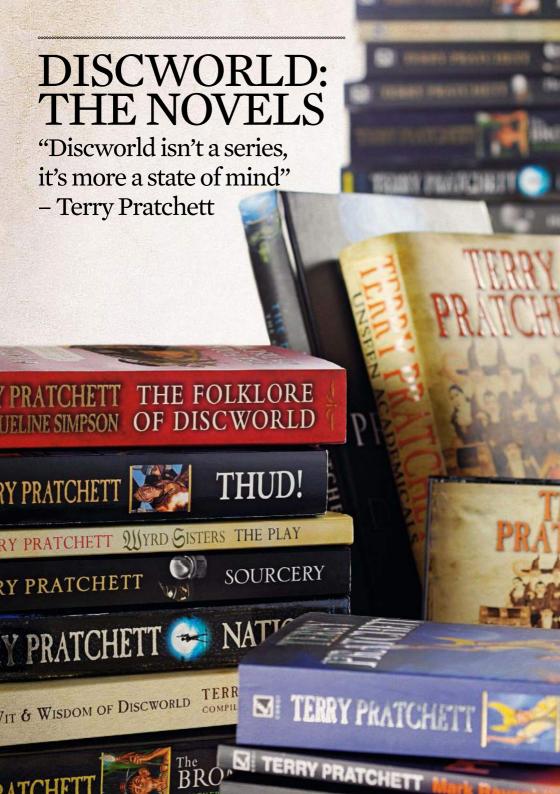
In 2010 he was granted his own coat of arms. They feature an owl, an ankh and the motto "Noli Timere Messorem" – which, translated, means "Don't fear the reaper".

The same year, he forged his own sword. With the help of experts he constructed a kiln, gathered 81kg of iron ore and pieces of meteorite and smelted it himself.

He donated *a lot* of money to Alzheimer's charities. In 2007 he gave \$1 million to the Alzheimer's Research Trust. The day after his death, fans had raised £28,000 for his chosen charity, The Research Institute for the Care of Older People (Rice).

And, of course, he wrote a lot of books. Too many to list here. in fact, but including: 41 Discworld novels: four Science Of Discworld books (with Professor Ian Stewart and Dr Jack Cohen); the Truckers trilogy; the Johnny Maxwell trilogy; the Long Earth quartet (with Stephen Baxter); six standalone novels (The Carpet People, The Dark Side Of The Sun, Strata, Nation, Dodger and Good Omens, with Neil Gaiman); The Unadulterated Cat; Where's My Cow; Dragons At Crumbling Castle; an anthology of short stories; a collection of non-fiction; and various maps, diaries and companion volumes.

EDITOR: Will Salmon ART EDITOR: Nicky Gotobed COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: Jesse Wild ILLUSTRATIONS: Taken from The Compleat Discovorld Atlas THANKS TO: Suzanne Bridson, Lauren Hyett, Melissa Klitzka, Laura Swainbank and Simon Taylor



he Discworld was Terry Pratchett's greatest creation and his life's work. Over an amazing 40 (soon-to-be 41) novels, he explored a flat world carried on the back of four elephants that stand atop a giant space-faring turtle. And yet this wasn't just an absurd fantasy realm - the Discworld often mirrored our own, the problems his cast of trolls, goblins, wizards and gods encountered often the same as ours. Hell. even Death sometimes needed to take a holiday... Here's your guide to every novel in the series, from 1983's The Colour Of Magic, to the forthcoming The Shepherd's Crown.



THE LIGHT FANTAST

#### RNNK 2

#### THE LIGHT FANTASTIC (1986)

In a turtle shell: A direct sequel to the first book. Rincewind is reunited with Twoflower as the Discworld heads towards a cosmic calamity.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"If I had stayed in the same environment of The Colour Of Magic and The Light Fantastic the whole time, people would say to me, 'whatever happened to Terry Pratchett?!""



#### **BOOK 4**

#### MORT (1987)

In a turtle shell: Death takes the lead when he hires a young apprentice. This is a great starting point for new readers - and the moment Discworld series starts to strut.

#### TFRRY FACT

Still one of Pratchett's most popular novels, Mort has been adapted for comics, radio, stage and even turned into a German-language musical.



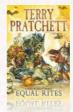
#### BOOK 1

#### THE COLOUR OF MAGIC (1983)

In a turtle shell: Where it all began. Incompetent wizard Rincewind guides tourist Twoflower around the city of Ankh-Morpork - and ends up on a magical adventure.

#### TERRY OUDTE

"The Colour Of Magic is the stand-up comic of fantasy there's never been one in fantasy before, it's so humourless."



#### RNNK 3

#### **EQUAL RITES (1987)**

In a turtle shell: Granny Weatherwax makes her debut and helps female wizard Esk enter the male-dominated Unseen University.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"People say, 'I know someone like Granny!' The reader is inserting that person into the story. A great deal of character work lies in describing the shape that they leave in the world."



#### **BOOK 5**

#### SOURCERY (1988)

In a turtle shell: Rincewind returns for a more traditional comic fantasy adventure than the previous two books. Nijel the Destroyer is an immediately pleasing addition to Disc-lore.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Sourcery marked the boundary. The books before that were 'Old Discworld'; the books after were 'New Discworld.' The same place, but by a better writer."





#### WYRD SISTERS (1988)

In a turtle shell: The witches are more fully developed in a novel that riffs heavily on Shakespeare. It came 135th in the BBC's Big Read poll for favourite books.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"There's some Macbeth in Wyrd Sisters, and Midsummer Night's Dream in Lords And Ladies, but in both books they're mixed up with other things..."



#### BOOK 8

#### GUARDS! GUARDS! (1989)

In a turtle shell: One of Pratchett's two favourite characters, Captain Sam Vimes, makes his debut in this brilliant book about a dragon and a plot to take over Ankh-Morpork.

#### **TERRY FACT**

Paul Darrow (best known as Avon from *Blake's 7*) played Vimes in an ambitious nationwide 1998 UK theatre adaptation of the book.



#### **BOOK 10**

#### **MOVING PICTURES (1990)**

In a turtle shell: Hollywood comes under Pratchett's satirical gaze when the Alchemists of the Discworld invent their version of motion pictures – cue a million movie references.

#### TERRY FACT

Gaspode the Wonder Dog was due to die, but Pratchett's editors convinced him to give the talking pooch a reprieve. He became a fan favourite.



#### **BOOK 7**

#### **PYRAMIDS (1989)**

In a turtle shell: A rare and darkly amusing Discworld one-off that takes us behind the scenes of Ankh-Morpork's Assassin's Guild and into the curiously familiar kingdom of Djelibeybi (say it out loud).

#### TERRY FACT

Pyramids won the prestigious British Fantasy Award when the book was first published in 1989.



#### RNNK 9

#### FAUST ERIC (1990)

In a turtle shell: A slim novel (available in an illustrated edition) that places Rincewind and The Luggage in a parody of the Faust myth, as they try to escape the Dungeon Dimensions.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I thought that basing it on the Faust myth would give me a lot of opportunities and there'd be lots of interesting things for Josh [Kirby] to draw. Simple as that."



#### **BOOK 11**

#### REAPER MAN (1991)

In a turtle shell: Death has enough of his job, quits and starts a new "life" as Bill Door. The consequences for the universe are disastrous.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Reaper Man's a bit of a mess. I think quite an enjoyable mess but I ran two plots together...
There were lots of bits in it that I really enjoyed, but really Reaper Man was two novels in one."





#### WITCHES ABROAD (1991)

In a turtle shell: Pratchett has great fun picking apart the structure of fairytales as the witches go on holiday, but come up against a rival who is manipulating the city of Genua.

#### TERRY FACT

Pratchett has described Genua as "a 'sort of' New Orleans with a 'sort of' Magic Kingdom grafted on top of it".



#### RNNK 14

#### LORDS AND LADIES (1992)

In a turtle shell: As Magrat Garlick prepares for her wedding, the Discworld comes into contact with the realm of the Fair Ones - deadly elves who threaten everything.

#### TERRY FACT

Pratchett considers this book to be the moment that Granny Weatherwax fully developed, after evolving over the course of the previous three novels.



#### **BOOK 16**

#### SOUL MUSIC (1994)

In a turtle shell: Mort and Ysabell's 16-year-old daughter Susan makes her debut in a wonderful romp through the clichés of rock 'n' roll excess.

#### TERRY FACT

Both Soul Music and Wyrd Sisters were animated by Cosgrove Hall. The legendary Sir Christopher Lee voiced Death, a role he reprised in Sky 1's series of TV adaptations.



#### **BOOK 13**

#### SMALL GODS (1992)

In a turtle shell: A skewering of organised religion, this is the tale of Brutha - a devout servant of the god Om, who is surprised when his lord is incarnated as a talking tortoise. One of Pratchett's darkest

#### TERRY OLIOTE

"I think I'm probably an atheist, but rather angry with God for not existing."



#### ROOK 15

#### MEN AT ARMS (1993)

In a turtle shell: A murderer is at work in Ankh-Morpork, and he's armed with a weapon the Discworld has never seen before: a "gonne", the first firearm.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"A character you liked had to die. It's not like The A-Team. I had to say guns kill, that's what happens. That's the thing about guns; that's what they're there for."



#### **BOOK 17**

#### INTERESTING TIMES (1994)

In a turtle shell: Rincewind and Cohen the Barbarian both return as war comes to the Discworld and two gods play a game with the fate of the Agatean Empire in the balance.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"The editor and my main beta-test reader have raised objections to the title Unclear Physics. So it will be the original working title: Interesting Times."





#### MASKERADE (1995)

In a turtle shell: The witches go to the opera and gain a new member in this wonderful twist on *The Phantom Of The Opera*.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Every minute I spent [at the Royal Opera House] was worth a golden guinea. It was not just the anecdotes about opera, but the little asides which the person didn't realise were important."



#### BOOK 19

#### FEET OF CLAY (1996)

In a turtle shell: Another attempt to oust the Patrician brings Vimes and the increasingly potent City Watch face-to-face with a deadly golem in this excellent whodunit.

#### TERRY OLIOTE

"It's too easy in fantasy to kill off hundreds of people. In reality, these people are just as real as the main characters."



#### **BOOK 20**

#### HOGFATHER (1996)

In a turtle shell: It's Chriiiistmass! Or, rather, Hogswatch. The 20th novel in the sequence is a festive tale that finds Death filling in when the Hogfather goes missing.

#### TERRY FACT

Hogfather was the first of three TV adaptations made for Sky 1 by production company The Mob. The Colour Of Magic and Going Postal followed.



#### RNNK 21

#### JINGO (1997)

In a turtle shell: War, what is it good for? A cracking novel full of justified anger at the stupidity of combat when relationships sour between Ankh-Morpork and Klatch. Vimes (by now clearly the moral centre of the Discworld) must save the day.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I think the book which generated the most mail and email was *Jingo*."



#### **BOOK 22**

#### THE LAST CONTINENT (1998)

In a turtle shell: Rincewind is now on the continent of XXXX, where he encounters magical kangaroo Scrappy. This time-travel caper finds Pratchett mining a rich seam of Australian puns and clichés.



#### **BOOK 23**

#### CARPE JUGULUM (1998)

In a turtle shell: It's vampires vs witches as the Magpyr family move into Lancre Castle and try to take over the land. Luckily Granny, Magrat and the coven are on hand to fight back.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I think I'm sophisticated enough not to have wizards with corks around their hats... but don't hold your breath."

#### TERRY FACT

Despite having written a book about vampires, Pratchett was outspoken at the time about his general dislike of almost all vampire fiction.





#### THE FIFTH ELEPHANT (1999)

In a turtle shell: The book that introduced The Clacks - the Disc's version of semaphore. Vimes travels to Überwald while the Watch search for the stolen Scone of Stone

#### TERRY OLINTE

"It's about how integrity makes poor armour. It's mainly about what happens when cultures meet and screw one another up."



#### ROOK 26

#### THIEF OF TIME (2001)

In a turtle shell: The Auditors of Reality get ticked off with the chaos of life and decide to tidy things up by freezing time. Susan Sto Helit and monk Lobsang Ludd must save the Disc.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"The idea of a perfect clock stopping Time seemed an inevitable next step. This made it a 'Susan' book, because she's not a creature of time."



#### **BOOK 28**

#### THE AMAZING MAURICE AND HIS EDUCATED RODENTS (2001)

In a turtle shell: Pratchett's first Discworld novel for younger readers tells the tale of a clever cat and a band of sentient rats who fake plague outbreaks in order to rob towns.

#### TERRY NUMBER

"My best books, I believe, have been written for children. Like the Johnny Maxwell series and The Amazing Maurice."



#### **BOOK 25**

#### THE TRUTH (2000)

In a turtle shell: Pratchett digs into his past as a journalist as the Discworld gets its first newspaper, while Lord Vetinari is framed for embezzlement.

#### TERRY OLINTE

"It's about the little things that happen when you start writing newspapers. How do people deal with you? Who are you answerable to?"



#### RNNK 27

#### THE LAST HERO (2001)

In a turtle shell: Cohen the Barbarian, the OAP hero introduced in The Light Fantastic, gets his turn in the spotlight as he leads the Silver Horde (from Interesting Times) on a quest.

#### TERRY FACT

This short novel is fully illustrated by Discworld stalwart Paul Kidby and is published in a large storybook format.



#### **BOOK 29**

#### NIGHT WATCH (2002)

In a turtle shell: One of Pratchett's most sophisticated novels, this time-travel tale flings Sam Vimes into the past, where he encounters his younger self and is forced to go undercover as riots erupt around the city.

#### TERRY FACT

This is the first main range Discworld novel to feature a Paul Kidby cover illustration, after Josh Kirby passed away.



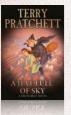


#### THE WEE FREE MEN (2003)

In a turtle shell: Another young adult novel, this time focusing on the Nac Mac Feegles – a pixie tribe – and nine-year-old witch, Tiffany Aching.

#### **TERRY FACT**

Pratchett signed a deal with Sony for a *Wee Free Men* movie. Sam Raimi was attached to direct, but Pratchett later described the script as "awful".



#### BOOK 32

#### A HAT FULL OF SKY (2004)

In a turtle shell: Tiffany becomes the apprentice of elderly witch, Miss Level. Unfortunately, she also has to fight off an invisible monster known as a Hiver with the help of the Nac Mac Feegles.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"The Nac Mac Feegles are basically pixies who have seen *Braveheart* altogether too many times. They go around in a mob and they drink and fight."



#### **BOOK 34**

#### THUD! (2005)

In a turtle shell: Sam Vimes has to solve the murder of a single dwarf if he wants to prevent all-out war erupting between the trolls and the dwarves.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Whether or not people are trolls, dwarfs, vampires or humans, as a matter of course they will in some understandable way behave like humans. They're all people."



#### **BOOK 31**

#### MONSTROUS REGIMENT (2003)

In a turtle shell: Polly Perks disguises herself as a man and joins the army of Borogravia in an attempt to find her brother. A war story that's also a sort of sequel to *The Truth*.

#### TERRY OLIOTE

"I really did enjoy writing Monstrous Regiment, which in a way became very close to becoming mainstream."



#### ROOK 33

#### GOING POSTAL (2004)

In a turtle shell: Conman Moist von Lipwig is given a bleak choice: take charge of Ankh-Morpork's post office or be executed. He chooses the former – but may yet come to regret that decision.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I've always had a soft spot for the Victorian mail system. It completely changed their [the Victorians'] world."



#### **BOOK 35**

#### WINTERSMITH (2006)

In a turtle shell: The spirit of winter falls in love with Tiffany Aching – which is, it turns out, actually a bit of a pain when you have chores to do.

Meanwhile, the Nac Mac Feegles are causing trouble as usual.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I think Granny moves [Tiffany] around so she's in position to learn the kinds of things she needs to learn."





#### **MAKING MONEY (2007)**

In a turtle shell: The second Moist von Lipwig story finds our tricksy hero tasked by the Patrician to restore the Royal Bank of Ankh-Morpork.

#### TERRY OLINTE

"The book is about: what is money? What is it that makes us believe that this little piece of paper with a picture on it is actually worth a good meal?"



#### ROOK 38

### I SHALL WEAR MIDNIGHT

In a turtle shell: Tiffany Aching comes of age in a more mature tale than the previous books in her sequence. She's united with Eskarina from Equal Rites and faces the deadly Cunning Man.

#### TERRY QUOTE

"Frankly, kids who are old enough to read and understand the books are old enough to understand the news."



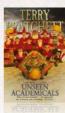
#### **BOOK 40**

#### **RAISING STEAM (2013)**

In a turtle shell: The third Moist novel finds the reformed conman turning his attention to the railway as the Discworld enters its equivalent of the Victorian age in earnest.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Somehow, it dropped in that Drumknott would be a geeky trainspotter, who doesn't really know he is one, but it creeps up on him."



#### **BOOK 37**

#### **UNSEEN ACADEMICALS (2009)**

In a turtle shell: Football comes to the Discworld, as the wizards of the Unseen University set out to civilise the game...

#### TERRY OLINTE

"Everyone knows that real football should have shorts that go down to your knees, and the goalkeeper should be enormously fat and smoke a pipe in the goal."



#### ROOK 39

#### SNUFF (2011)

In a turtle shell: Vimes takes a holiday in the country, but it's far from relaxing when he discovers that goblins are being forced into slavery.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"Everyone knows goblins are bad, but if you see them as bad and treat them as such, then they will be bad. Our society could actually take a few words of advice from that."



#### **BOOK 41**

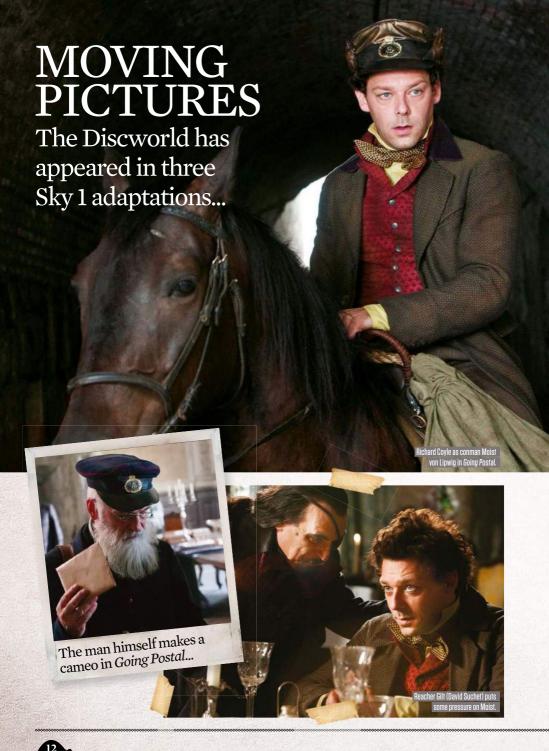
### THE SHEPHERD'S CROWN

In a turtle shell: Little is known about the final Discworld novel except that it finds Tiffany in an adult (rather than YA) novel and is published on 10 September.

#### TERRY OUOTE

"I can get inside most of my characters, but Tiffany Aching and Vimes have been with me for so long now, they've kind of been laminated into myself."







Death's daughter, Susan (Michelle Dockery).





# A FRIEND INDEED

From SFX's launch, Terry was a regular guest star in the magazine







The Discworld animations put Terry's world on TV screens and our cover in issue 25.

He revealed his writing influences to us in issue 196.

GOING ON THE RAILS...

TERRY PRATCHETT
DISCUSSES HIS NEW DISCUSSES HIS NEW DOVEL AND POTENTIALLY
CALLING TIME
ON HIS CAREER AS A NOVELIST.
JONATHAN WRIGHY LISTENS IN
PRIMARINE HERBRISH
PRIMARINE HERBRISH
PRIMARINE HERBRISH

He always spoke candidly about whatever was on his mind.



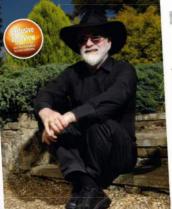




He gave us the scoop on the in development Watch TV series.



The first SFX special we released was all about Discworld.



Tough at the top

PRATCHETT

He was often up for a trip to Bath, our home – and where he bought hats!

We interviewed Terry many times over 20 years.





scenario perfectly."

FOUR MORE TIMES TERRY HELPED **SFX** OUT...

• He penned a diary of his Australian promotional tour for *The Last Continent* in 1998.

• He guest edited issue 196.

• He wrote a piece on why he thought *Doctor Who* was ridiculous (but enjoyed

• He held a production meeting for the mooted The Watch TV series in SFX Towers - bacon butties were on the table. Watch the results at bit.ly/pterrysfx.

# THE COMPLEAT DISCWORLD ATLAS

An exclusive preview from the new book Terry wrote with the Discworld Emporium







#### ÜBERWALD

"Small independent territories throughout the country are ruled by noble families, many of whom date back hundreds of years in an unbroken line or in some cases, unbroken lifespans - of stake and coffin. There are also family packs of lycanthropes that coexist in an uneasy alliance with the vampire clans."

#### NOMADS OF THE HUBLAND STEPPES

"An area of high treeless plains in the shadow of the Hub, inhabited by nomadic horsemen. Intensely tribal and warlike, they are in continual strife with their neighbours and believe that death in combat will be rewarded with an afterlife of carousing and feasting in the company of buxom young women. This expectation makes for particularly fearless warriors."





#### THE KINGDOM OF DJELIBEYBI

"Since the decline in demand for prime riverside sites for fashionable pyramids, there has been a notable drop in the frequency of famines in the kingdom."

#### DIRE YAKS

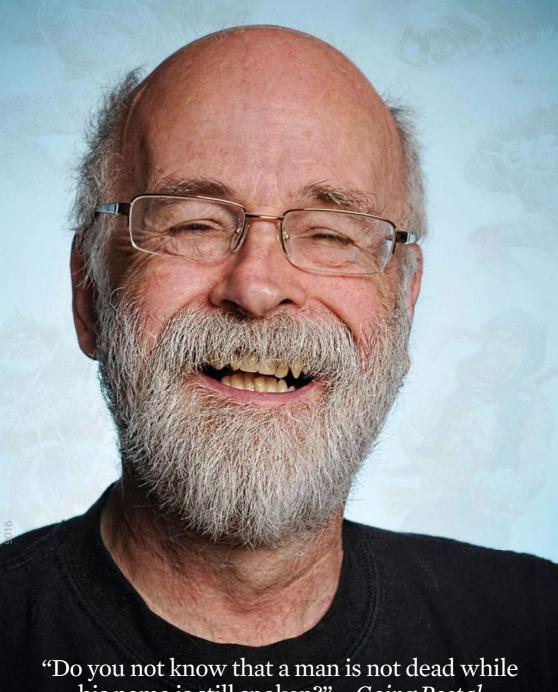
"The nomadic Gangbaatar tribes wander the high plains with their herds of giant Dire Yak which supply them with shelter, food, clothing, fuel for their fires, entertainment and sometimes romance."











"Do you not know that a man is not dead while his name is still spoken?" – *Going Postal* 

♠ 1948 - 2015 ♠